

Chapter III

3. Geography

3.1 Land Area

With a landmass of 9,600,000 sq. km (as claimed by China, but Indian position on Indo-China border length has already been explained in Chapter 5 & 6 of the compendium). China is the third largest country in the world. Located in the east of the Asian continent, on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean, the People's Republic of China has a land area of about 9.6 million sq. km, and is the third-largest country in the world, next only to Russia and Canada.

From north to south, the territory of China stretches from the center of the Heilong River north of the town of Mohe to the Zengmu Reef at the southernmost tip of the Nansha Islands, covering a distance of 5,500 km. From east to west, the nation extends from the confluence of the Heilong and Wusuli rivers to the Pamirs, covering a distance of 5,200 km.

With a land boundary of some 22,800 km (as claimed by China, but Indian position on Indo-China border length has already been explained in Chapter 5 & 6 of the compendium). China is bordered by Korea to the east; Mongolia to the north; Russia to the northeast; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the northwest; Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan to the west and southwest; and Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam to the south. Across the seas to the east and southeast are the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.

China's mainland coastline measures approximately 18,000 km, with a flat topography, and many excellent docks and harbours, most of which are ice-free all year round. The Chinese mainland is flanked to the east and south by the Bohai, Yellow, East China and South China seas, with a total maritime area of 4.73 million sq. km. The Bohai Sea is China's continental sea, while the Yellow, East China and South China seas are marginal seas of the Pacific Ocean.¹³⁸

A total of 5,400 islands dot China's territorial waters. The largest of these, with an area of about 36,000 sq km, is Taiwan, followed by Hainan with an area of 34,000 sq km. The Diaoyu and Chiwei islands, located to the northeast of Taiwan Island, are China's easternmost islands. The many islands, islets, reefs and shoals in the South China Sea, known collectively as the South China Sea Islands, are China's southernmost island group. They are called the Dongsha (East Sandbar), Xisha (West Sandbar), Zhongsha (Middle Sandbar) and Nansha (South Sandbar) island groups according to their geographical locations.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ http://english1.englishgov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182551.htm

¹³⁹ Ibid.

3.2 Physical Features

China's topography was formed around the emergence of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the most important geological event over the past several million years. Taking a bird's-eye view of China, the terrain gradually descends from west to east like a staircase. Due to the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau rose continuously to become the top of the four-step "staircase," averaging more than 4,000 m above sea level, and called "the roof of the world." Soaring 8,848 m above sea level on the plateau is Mount Qomolangma (Mount Everest), the world's highest peak and the main peak of the Himalayas. The second step includes the gently sloping Inner Mongolia Plateau, the Loess Plateau, the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, the Tarim Basin, the Junggar Basin and the Sichuan Basin, with an average elevation of between 1,000 m and 2,000 m. The third step, dropping to 500-1,000 m in elevation, begins at a line drawn around the Greater Hinggan, Taihang, Wushan and Xuefeng mountain ranges and extends eastward to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. Here, from north to south, are the Northeast Plain, the North China Plain and the Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain. Interspersed amongst the plains are hills and foothills. To the east, the land extends out into the ocean, in a continental shelf, the fourth step of the staircase. The water here is mostly less than 200 m deep.¹⁴⁰

3.3 Rivers and Lakes

China abounds in rivers. More than 1,500 rivers each drain 1,000 sq km or larger areas. Most of the large rivers have their source on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and drop greatly between source and mouth. As a result, China is rich in water-power resources, leading the world in hydropower potential, with reserves of 680 million kw.

Major Rivers

River	Drainage Area (sq km)	Length (km)	Annual Flow (100 million cu.m)
Changsiang River (Yangtze River)	1782715	6300	9857
Huanghe River (Yellow River)	752773	5464	592
Songhuajiang River	561222	2308	818
Liaohu River	221097	1390	137
Zhujiang River (Pearl River)	442527	2214	3381
Haihe River	265511	1090	163
Huaihe River	268957	1000	595

Source: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2019/indexeh.htm>

¹⁴⁰ http://english1.english.gov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182544.htm

Drainage Areas of Rivers

River	Drainage Area (sq.km)	Percentage to Total (%)
Total of Out-flowing Rivers and Inland Rivers	9506678	100.00
Out-flowing Rivers	6150927	64.70
Hedongjiang River and Suifenhe River	934802	9.83
Liaohe, Yalujiang and Related Coastal Rivers	314146	3.30
Hahe River and Luanhe River	320041	3.37
Huanghe River (Yellow River)	752773	7.92
Huaihe and Related Coastal Rivers in Shandong Province	330009	3.47
Changjiang River (Yangtze River)	1782715	18.75
Rivers in Zhejiang, Fujian and Taiwan Provinces	244574	2.57
Zhupang River (Pearl River) and Related Coastal River	578974	6.09
Yuanjiang River and Lancang River	240389	2.53
Nanjing River and West Yunnan Rivers	157392	1.66
Brahmaputra and Southern Tibet Rivers	387550	4.08
Western Tibet Rivers	58783	0.62
Ertis River	48779	0.51
Inland Rivers	3355751	35.30
Rivers in Inner Mongolia	311378	3.28
Rivers in Huanghe Upper Reach Area	469843	4.94
Rivers in Zhanger Basin	323621	3.40
Rivers in Central Asia	77757	0.82
Rivers in Tarim Basin	1079643	11.36
Rivers in Qinghai Province	321161	3.38
Rivers in Qiangtang	730077	7.68
Blind Drainage Areas of Songhua River, Huanghe River and Southern Tibet	42271	0.44

Source: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2019/indexeh.htm>

China's rivers can be categorized as exterior and interior systems. The catchment area of the exterior rivers that empty into the oceans accounts for 64 percent of the country's total land area. The Yangtze, Yellow, Heilong, Pearl, Liaohe, Haihe and Huaihe rivers flow east, and empty into the Pacific Ocean. The Yarlungzangbo River in Tibet, which flows first east and then south into the Indian Ocean, boasts the Yarlungzangbo Grand Canyon, the largest canyon in the world, 504.6 km long and 6,009 m deep. The Ertix River flows north from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to the Arctic Ocean. The catchment area of the interior rivers that flow into inland lakes or disappear into deserts or salt marshes makes up about 36 percent of China's total land area. Its 2,179 km make the Tarim River in southern Xinjiang China's longest interior river.

The Yangtze, 6,300 km long, is the largest river in China, and the third largest in the world, next only to the Nile in Africa and the Amazon in South America. Passing through high mountains and deep valleys, the upper section of the Yangtze River is abundant in water resources. Known as the "golden waterway," the Yangtze is a transportation artery linking west and east, its navigation benefiting from excellent natural channels. The middle and lower Yangtze River areas have a warm and humid climate, plentiful rainfall and fertile soil, making them important agricultural regions. The Yellow River is the second largest river in China with a length of 5,464 km. The Yellow River valley was one of the birthplaces of ancient Chinese civilization. It has lush pasturelands along its banks, flourishing agriculture and abundant mineral deposits. The Heilong River is a large river in north China with a total length of 4,350 km, of which, 3,101 km are in China. The Pearl River (Zhujiang), 2,214 km long, is a large river in south China. In addition to those bestowed by nature, China has a famous man-made river - the Grand Canal, running from Beijing in the north to Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province in the south. Work first began on the Grand Canal as early as in the fifth century A.D. It links five major rivers: the Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze and Qiantang. With a total length of 1,801 km, the Grand Canal is the longest as well as the oldest man-made waterway in the world. China's territory includes numerous lakes, most of which are found on the Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Freshwater lakes such as Poyang, Dongting, Taihu, and Hongze mostly lie in the former area, while in the latter are saltwater lakes, such as Qinghai, Nam Co and Siling Co. Poyang Lake, in the north of Jiangxi Province and with an area of 3,583 sq km, is the largest of its kind. Qinghai Lake, in northeast Qinghai Province and with an area of 4,583 sq km, is the largest one of its kind.

3.4 Climate

Most of China lies in the north temperate zone, characterized by a warm climate and distinctive seasons, a climate well suited for habitation. Most of China has a continental monsoon climate. From September to April the following year, the dry and cold winter monsoons blow from Siberia and the Mongolian Plateau, resulting in cold and dry winters and great differences between the temperatures of north and south China. From April to September, warm and humid summer monsoons blow from the seas in the east and south, resulting in overall high temperatures and plentiful rainfall, and little temperature difference between north and south China. In terms of temperature, the nation can be sectorized from south to north into equatorial, tropical, subtropical, warm-temperate, temperate, and cold-temperate zones. Precipitation gradually declines from the south-

eastern to the north-western inland area, and the average annual precipitation varies greatly from place to place. In south-eastern coastal areas, it reaches over 1,500 mm, while in north-western areas, it drops to below 200 mm.¹⁴¹

3.5 Land and Mineral Resources

When describing China's cultivated land and mineral resources, people often use many huge numbers. Cultivated land, forests, grasslands, deserts and tidelands are distributed widely across China. Cultivated land is mainly located in east China, grasslands are mainly located in the north and west, and forests mainly in the remote north-eastern and southwestern areas.¹⁴² In China today, 130.04 million ha of land are cultivated, mainly on the Northeast Plain, the North China Plain, the Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain, the Pearl River Delta and the Sichuan Basin. The fertile black soil of the Northeast Plain, the largest plain in China with an area of more than 350,000 sq. km, abounds in wheat, corn, sorghum, soybeans, flax and sugar beet. The deep, brown topsoil of the North China Plain is planted with wheat, corn, millet and cotton. The Middle-Lower Yangtze Plain's flat terrain and many lakes and rivers make it particularly suitable for paddy rice and freshwater fish, hence its designation of "land of fish and rice." This area also produces large quantities of tea and silkworms. The purplish soil of the warm and humid Sichuan Basin is green with crops in all four seasons, including paddy rice, rapeseed and sugarcane, making it known as the "land of plenty." The Pearl River Delta abounds with paddy rice, harvested 2-3 times every year.

Land Characteristics

Item	Area (10 000 sq.km)
Cultivated Land	134.9
Garden Land	14.2
Forests Land	252.8
Area of Grassland	219.3
Other Land for Agriculture Use	23.6
Land for Inhabitation, Mining and Manufacturing	32.1
Land for Transport Facilities	3.8
Land for Water Conservancy Facilities	3.6

Source: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2019/indexeh.htm>

¹⁴¹ http://english1.english.gov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182533.htm

¹⁴² http://english1.english.gov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182529.htm

Forests cover only 175 million ha of China. The Greater Hinggan, Lesser Hinggan and Changbai mountain ranges in the northeast are China's largest natural forest areas. Major tree species found here include conifers, such as Korean pine, larch and Olga Bay larch, and coniferous-broadleaf trees such as white birch, oak, willow, elm and Northeast China ash. Major tree species in the southwest include the dragon spruce, fir and Yunnan pine, as well as teak, red sandalwood, camphor, nanmu and padauk. Often called a kingdom of plants," Xishuangbanna in the south of Yunnan Province is a rare tropical broadleaf forest area in China, playing host to more than 5,000 plant species.

Grasslands in China cover an area of 400 million ha, stretching more than 3,000 km from the northeast to the southwest. They are the centres of animal husbandry. The Inner Mongolian Prairie is China's largest natural pastureland, and home to the famous Sanhe horses, Sanhe cattle and Mongolian sheep. The important natural pasturelands north and south of the Tianshan Mountains in Xinjiang are ideal for stockbreeding. The famous Ili horses and Xinjiang fine-wool sheep are raised here.

China's cultivated lands, forests and grasslands are among the world's largest in terms of sheer area. But due to China's large population, the per-capita areas of cultivated land, forest and grassland are small, especially in the case of cultivated land -- only one third of the world's average.

China is rich in mineral resources, and all the world's known minerals can be found here. To date, geologists have confirmed reserves of 158 different minerals, putting China third in the world in terms of total reserves. Reserves of the major mineral resources, such as coal, iron, copper, aluminium, stibium, molybdenum, manganese, tin, lead, zinc and mercury, are in the world's front rank. China's basic coal reserves total 334.2 billion tons, mainly distributed in northeast China and north China, with Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Shanxi Province and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region heading the field. China's 21.24 billion tons of the basic iron ore reserve are mainly distributed in northeast, north and southwest China. The country also abounds in petroleum, natural gas, oil shale, phosphorus and sulphur. Petroleum reserves are mainly found in northwest, northeast and north China, as well as in the continental shelves of east China. The national reserves of rare earth metals far exceed the combined total for the rest of the world.

Identified Reserves of Major Minerals

Item	2006	2010	2015	2016	2017
Coal (100 million tons)	11597.8	13411.9	15663.1	15980.0	16666.7
Petroleum (100 million tons)	27.6	31.7	35.0	35.0	35.4
Natural Gas (100 million cu.m)	30009.0	37793.2	51939.5	54365.5	55221.0
Coalbed Gas (100 million cu.m)		1318.4	3062.5	3344.0	3025.4
Shale Gas (100 million cu.m)		*	1301.8	1224.1	1992.9
Iron Ore (100 million tons)	607.3	727.0	850.8	840.6	848.9
Manganese Ore (100 million tons)	7.7	8.9	13.8	15.5	18.5
Chromite Ore (10 000 tons)	1007.8	1114.4	1245.8	1233.2	1220.2
Vanadium Ore V ₂ O ₅ (10 000 tons)		4381.9	6125.7	6401.8	6428.2
Titanium Ore TiO ₂ (100 million tons)	7.0	7.2	7.6	7.9	8.2
Copper Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	7047.8	8040.7	9910.2	10110.6	10607.8
Lead Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	4141.4	5509.1	7766.9	8546.8	8967.0
Zinc Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	9710.9	11596.2	14985.2	17753.0	18493.9
Bauxite Ore (100 million tons)	27.8	37.5	47.1	48.5	50.9
Nickel Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	801.4	938.0	1116.6	1118.4	1118.1
Cobalt Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	66.1	68.2	68.0	67.3	68.8
Tungsten Ore WO ₃ (10 000 tons)	558.4	591.0	958.8	1016.0	1030.4
Tin Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	476.9	431.9	418.0	445.3	450.0
Molybdenum Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	1094.2	1401.8	2917.6	2882.4	3006.8
Antimony Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	225.1	255.0	292.6	307.2	319.8
Gold Ore Metals (ton)	4996.9	6864.8	11563.5	12167.0	13195.6
Silver Ore Metals (10 000 tons)	14.4	17.2	25.4	27.5	31.6
Platinum Family Metals (ton)	339.6	334.6	369.2	365.5	365.3
Strontium Ore (10 000 tons)	4652.3	4375.4	5583.3	5515.6	5644.1
Lithium Oxide (10 000 tons)			970.8	961.5	967.4
Magnesite Ore (100 million tons)	35.9	36.4	29.7	30.9	31.2
Fluorite Minerals (100 million tons)	1.7	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.4
Refractory Clay Ore (100 million tons)	23.4	24.6	25.6	25.8	25.9
Pyrite Ore (100 million tons)	54.1	56.9	58.8	60.4	60.6
Phosphate Ore (100 million tons)	169.8	186.3	231.1	244.1	252.8
Potassium KCl (100 million tons)	8.8	9.3	10.8	10.6	10.3
Boron Ore B ₂ O ₃ (10 000 tons)	7275.7	7309.2	7575.7	7647.6	7817.3
Sodium Salt NaCl (100 million tons)	13126.1	13337.7	13680.0	14128.6	14224.9
Glauber's Salt Na ₂ SO ₄ (100 million tons)	207.7	934.2	1170.7	1171.1	1171.2
Barite Ore (100 million tons)	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.6
Limestone Ore for Cement (100 million tons)	789.5	1021.0	1282.3	1343.3	1370.1
Glass Siliceous Ore (100 million tons)	53.4	64.7	79.0	83.2	88.8
Gypsum Ore (100 million tons)	682.5	769.1	1004.2	972.6	984.7
Kaolin Ore (100 million tons)	18.3	21.0	27.1	34.0	34.7
Bentonite Ore (100 million tons)	29.4	28.0	28.9	29.7	30.6
Diatomite Ore (100 million tons)	4.7	4.3	4.8	4.9	5.1
Ornamental Granite (100 million cu.m)	21.5	21.8	34.3	46.4	50.6
Decorated Marble (100 million cu.m)	14.1	13.7	16.1	16.3	16.8
Diamond Minerals (kg)	3644.8	3702.1	3396.5	3124.6	3124.6
Crystalline Graphite Minerals (100 million tons)	1.6	1.9	2.6	3.0	3.7
Asbestos Minerals (10 000 tons)	9552.4	8975.3	9157.4	9566.2	9545.9
Talc Ore (100 million tons)	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
Wollastonite Ore (100 million tons)	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7

Source: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2019/indexeh.htm>

3.6 Plants and Animals

China is one of the countries with the greatest diversity of wildlife in the world. There are more than 6,266 species of vertebrates, 10 percent of the world's total. Among them 2,404 are terrestrials and 3,862 fishes. There are more than 100 wild animal species unique to China including such well-known rare animals as the giant panda, golden-haired monkey, South China tiger, brown-eared pheasant, red-crowned crane, red ibis, white-flag dolphin and Chinese alligator. The black-and-white giant panda weighs on average 135 kg and lives on tender bamboo leaves and bamboo shoots. Because it is extremely rare --just over 1,500 are left at present -- it has become the symbol of the world's protected wild animals. The red-crowned crane, that could be as tall as 1.2 m, is covered with white feathers, with a distinctive patch of exposed red skin crowning its head and is regarded as a symbol of longevity in East Asia. The white-flag dolphin is one of only two species of freshwater whales in the world. In 1980, a male white-flag dolphin was caught for the first time in the Yangtze River, which aroused great interest among dolphin researchers worldwide.¹⁴³

China is also one of the countries with the most abundant plant life in the world. There are more than 32,000 species of higher plants, and almost all the major plants that grow in the northern hemisphere's frigid, temperate and tropical zones are represented in China. In addition, there are more than 7,000 species of woody plants, including 2,800-odd tree species. The metasequoia, Chinese cypress, Cathay silver fir, China fir, golden larch, Taiwan fir, Fujian cypress, dove-tree, eucommia and camptotheca acuminata are found only in China. The metasequoia, a tall species of arbor, is considered to be one of the oldest and rarest plants in the world. The golden larch, one of only five species of rare garden trees in the world, grows in the mountainous areas in the Yangtze River valley. Its coin-shaped leaves on short branches are green in spring and summer, turning yellow in autumn. China is home to more than 2,000 species of edible plants and over 3,000 species of medicinal plants. Ginseng from the Changbai Mountains, safflowers from Tibet, Chinese wolfberry from Ningxia and notoginseng from Yunnan and Guizhou are particularly well-known Chinese herbal medicines. China has a wide variety of flowering plants; the peony, a flower indigenous to China and known as the "king of flowers" is characterized by large blossoms, multiple petals and bright colours, and is treasured as one of the country's national flowers.¹⁴⁴

3.7 Topography

Note: map to be affixed later from VIF.

The topography varies greatly in China, a vast land of lofty plateau, large plains, rolling land and big and small basins surrounded by lofty mountains. All the five basic topographic types in the world exist in China to create the conditions for developing industry and agriculture. Mountainous land and very rough terrains make up 2/3 of Chinese territory, and this has created some problems in transport and in the development of agricultural production. However such topographical

¹⁴³ http://english1.english.gov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182521.htm

¹⁴⁴ http://english1.english.gov.cn/2006-02/08/content_182521.htm

features are conducive to the development of forestry, mineral and hydropower resources and tourism.¹⁴⁵

Land Taken Up by Various Types of Terrain

Hilly land	Plateaus	Basins	Rolling land	Plains
33.3%	26%	18.8%	9.9%	12.0%

Land of Various Elevation Types

>3000	>2000	>1000	>500	<500
25.9%	7%	25%	16.9%	25.2%

With highlands in the west and plains in the east, China has a varied topography. The lie of the land may be divided into three tiers. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau that rises more than 4,000m above sea-level forms the highest tier. It is a land of peaks and valleys studded with innumerable lakes. Along the plateau's southwestern fringe is the Himalayan Range, on the eastern section of which looms the 8,848.13 meter-high Mt. Qomolangma, the world's loftiest peak. The vast area north and east of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau that drops to an elevation below 1,100-2,000m forms the second tier—a land interspersed with extensive basins and highlands. Here the Turpan Basin in Xinjiang is 154m below sea-level—the lowest depression in China. The third tier is a vast area of rolling hills and plains with an elevation below 500m lying east of the line running from the Greater Hinggan and Taihang ranges in the north to the foothills of the Wushan Mountains and the Yunnan-Guizhou Highlands in the south. Though some peaks in this area are as high as 2,000m, the plains along the coast have an elevation of less than 50m. Off the Chinese coast is an extensive continental shelf richly endowed with petroleum, natural gas and marine resources.

There are many mountain ranges in China. Those extending from east to west are the Tianshan-Yinshan ranges and those in the center are the Kunlun-Qinling ranges, and those in the south are the Nanling ranges. Ranges that stretch in a NE-SW direction are, for the most part, located in the eastern part of China. They are the Greater Hinggan Range, Taihang, Wushan, Xuefengshan, Changbaishan and Wuyishan ranges. Those running in a NW-SE direction are the Altai and Qilianshan ranges. Ranges that run in a north-south direction are the Hengduanshan and Helanshan ranges. And on the border between China and India, Nepal and other countries looms the 2,400 kilometers-long Himalayan Range with an average elevation of 6,000m.

¹⁴⁵ http://english1.english.gov.cn/2005-08/08/content_21134.htm

Main Mountain Ranges in China

Mountain Range	Elevation (in meter)	Highest Peak(meter)	
Altay	3,000	Friendship Peak	4,374
Tian Shan	5,000	Tuomu'er	7,435
Altun	4,000	Sulamutage	6,295
Qilian Shan	4,000+	Qilian Shan	5,547
Shulenan Shan	4,000+	Unity Peak	5,827
Kunlun	5,000+	Gongge'er	7,719
Alge	5,000+	Bukadaban	6,860
Kekexili	6,000	Gangzhari	6,305
Bayankala	5,000+	Guoluo	5,369
Animaqing	5,000+	Maqing Gangri	6,282
Tanggula	6,000	Geladandong	6,621
Gangdisi	6,000	Lengbugangri	7,095
Nian Qing Tanggula	6,000	Nian Qing Tanggula	7,111
Kara Kunlun	6,000+	Qiaogeli	8,611
Himalayan Range	6,000+	Mt. Qomolangma	8,848.13
Hengduan	4,000+	Gongga	7,556
Nu Shan	4,000+	Meilixue Shan	6,740
Shaluli Shan	4,000+	Que'er Shan	6,168
Daxue Shan	5,000	Gongga Shan	7,556
Wuliang Shan	1,600	Maotou Shan	3,306
Ailao Shan	1,600	Ailao Shan	3,166
Wumeng Shan	2,000	Jiucaping	2,900
Wuling Shan	1,000+	Fenghuang Shan	2,570
Daba	2,000+	Motianling	4,072
Daba Shan	2,000	Shennong Peak	3,105
Qinling	2,000	Taibai Shan	3,767
Hua Shan	1,500+	Caolianling	2,646
Dabie Shan	1,000	Huo Shan	1,774
Liupan Shan	2,000	Migang Shan	2,942
Helan Shan	2,000+	Helan Shan	3,556
Yin Shan	1,500+	Huhebashige	2,364
Greater Hinggan	1,100+	Huanggangliang	2,029
Lesser Hinggan	500+	Pingding Shan	1,429
Changbai Shan	1,000	Baiyun Peak	2,691
Zhangguangcai	800+	Datudingzi	1,669
Longgang Shan	700+	Gang Shan	1,347
Yan Shan	1,000	Wuling Shan	2,116
Taihang Shan	1,000+	Xiaowutai Shan	2,882
Xi Shan	1,000	Dongling Shan	2,303
Wutai Shan	2,500	Beitai Peak	3,058
Luliang Shan	1,500+	Nanyang Shan	2,831
Tai Shan	1,000	Yuhuang Peak	1,524
Yuntai Shan	300	Yuntai Shan	625
Tianma Shan	50+	Tianma Shan	98
Tianmu Shan	1,000	Qingliang Peak	1,787
Donggong Shan	1,100+	Huangmao Peak	1,921
Wuyi Shan	1,000+	Huanggang Shan	2,158
Huang Shan	1,000	Lianhua Peak	1,873
Luoxiao Shan	1,000	Nanfengmian	2,120
Xuefeng Shan	1,000	Subaoding	1,934
Nanling	1,000+	Mao'er Shan	2,142
Yao Shan	1,000	Shikengkong	1,902
Wuzhi Shan	1,000	Wuzhi Shan	1,867
Lianhua Shan	800+	Tongguzhang	1,560
Zhongyang Shan	3,000+	Xiugulan Shan	3,833
Yu Shan	3,000+	Yu Shan	3,997
Ali Shan	1,500+	Data Shan	2,663
Taidong Shan	500+	Xingang Shan	1,582

Source: http://english1.english.gov.cn/2005-08/08/content_21134.htm

There are four extensive plateaus that differ greatly in height and topographical features as shown in table below :

	Location	Striking Features
Qinghai-Tibet Plateau	Located in southwestern China, it incorporates Tibet, Qinghai and western part of Sichuan. Surrounded by Himalaya, Kunlun and other ranges.	Covering 1/4 the size of China, the plateau is a land of pastures, snow-capped peaks and glaciers. Average height 4000-plus meters.
Inner Mongolian Plateau	Situated in northern China, it incorporates the greatest part of Inner Mongolia and parts of Gansu, Ningxia and Hebei.	A rolling land with average elevation of 1000 meters, it is China's second biggest plateau. In the eastern part are grasslands and in the western part are gobi and deserts.
Loess Plateau	Located in central part of China, it spreads over the whole of Shanxi and parts of Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia.	Carpeted by thick layers of yellow loessial soil, it is 1000-2000m above sea-level. For the most part barren and gutted by gullies, the plateau is plagued by serious soil erosion.
Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau	Located in southwestern China, it takes up the eastern part of Yunnan and a great part of Guizhou.	With very rugged terrain, the plateau has elevation of 1000-2000m. It has numerous valleys, small basins, limestone hills and caves.

In China are four large basins as shown in table below :

	Location	Striking Features
Tarim Basin	Situated between Tianshan and Kunlun ranges, the basin lies in southern Xinjiang	This largest basin in China located 800-1300m above sea-level incorporates the Taklimakan Desert, the biggest desert in China. On the fringe of the desert are many oases in which cotton, wheat and grapes are grown
Junggar Basin	This basin in northern Xinjiang lies between Tianshan and Altay ranges	It is the second largest basin in China. With elevation of 500-1000m, the basin has wind-eroded landscapes and small deserts
Qaidam Basin	This basin in northwestern Qinghai lies between Kunlun, Altay and Qilian ranges	With elevation of 2000-3000m, it is the highest basin in China. Southeastern part is studded with salt lakes and marshes
Sichuan Basin	This basin in eastern Sichuan is situated between Wushan, Dabashan, Hengduanshan and Daloushan ranges	With elevation of 300-600m, the basin is a large plain dotted with hills and traversed by numerous rivers

In China are three large plains with fertile soil, on which crops grow in luxuriant, as well as many small ones in the Chengdu area, the Pearl River Delta, western Taiwan Province and other areas:

The Three Large Plains in China

	Location	Striking Features	Composition
Northeast China Plain	In the three provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning in NE China and part of Inner Mongolia	Most of it is less than 200m above sea-level	Made up of the Sanjiang, Songnen, Liaohe plains
North China Plain	In Hebei, Shandong, Henan provinces, parts of Anhui and Jiangsu provinces and outlying areas of Beijing and Tianjin cities	China's second largest plain, most of it has an elevation of less than 50m	Made up of Haihe and Huanghuai plains
Plain on lower and middle reaches of Yangtze River	It incorporates Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Anhui, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and outlying areas of Shanghai	Most of it is less than 50m above sea-level. It is studded with lakes and crisscrossed by canals and rivers	Made up of Yangtze River Delta and several other plains

3.8 People

China is a unified nation consisting of many different ethnic groups. Fifty-six different ethnic groups make up the great Chinese national family. Because the Han people accounts for more than ninety percent of China's population, the remaining fifty-five groups are generally referred to as "ethnic minorities." Next to the majority Han, the Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, and Uygur peoples comprise the largest ethnic groups. Although China's ethnic minorities do not account for a large portion of the population, they are distributed over a vast area, residing in every corner of China.

Particularly since the implementation of China's opening and reform policy, the central government has increased investment in minority areas and accelerated their opening to the outside world. This has resulted in an upsurge of economic development in these areas. Each of China's ethnic minority groups possesses a distinctive culture. The Chinese government respects minority customs, and works to preserve, study, and collate the cultural artefacts of China's ethnic minority groups. The government vigorously supports the development of minority culture and the training of minority cultural workers, and fosters the development of traditional minority medicine.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ For detailed information on China's provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions' geographical locations, population, ethnicity & trade, etc., kindly access the following URL: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/43606.htm>

The relation among China's ethnic groups can be described as "overall integration, local concentration, mutual interaction." Concentrations of ethnic minorities reside within predominantly Han areas, and the Han people also reside in minority areas, indicating that there has been extensive exchanges among China's ethnic groups since ancient times. With the development of the market economy, interaction among ethnic groups has become even more active in the areas of government, economics, culture, daily life, and marriage. Linked by interdependence, mutual assistance, and joint development, their common goals and interests creating a deep sense of solidarity, China's ethnic groups resemble a great national family, together building Chinese civilization.¹⁴⁷

3.9 Ethnic groups in China

Achang Ethnic Minority	Bai Ethnic Minority	Blang Ethnic Minority	Bonan Ethnic Minority	Bouyei Ethnic Minority
Dai Ethnic Minority	Daur Ethnic Minority	De'ang Ethnic Minority	Dong Ethnic Minority	Dongxiang Ethnic Minority
Drung Ethnic Minority	Ewenki Ethnic Minority	Gaoshan Ethnic Minority	Gelo Ethnic Minority	Han Ethnic Group
Hani Ethnic Minority	Hezhe Ethnic Minority	Hui Ethnic Minority	Jing Ethnic Minority	Jingpo Ethnic Minority
Jino Ethnic Minority	Kazak Ethnic Minority	Kirgiz Ethnic Minority	Korean Ethnic Minority	Lahu Ethnic Minority
Lhoba Ethnic Minority	Li Ethnic Minority	Lisu Ethnic Minority	Manchu Ethnic Minority	Maonan Ethnic Minority
Miao Ethnic Minority	Moinba Ethnic Minority	Mongolian Ethnic Minority	Mulam Ethnic Minority	Naxi Ethnic Minority
Nu Ethnic Minority	Oroqen Ethnic Minority	Ozbek Ethnic Minority	Pumi Ethnic Minority	Qiang Ethnic Minority
Russian Ethnic Minority	Salar Ethnic Minority	She Ethnic Minority	Shui Ethnic Minority	Tajik Ethnic Minority
Tatar Ethnic Minority	Tibetan Ethnic Minority	Tu Ethnic Minority	Tujia Ethnic Minority	Uygur Ethnic Minority
Va Ethnic Minority	Xibe Ethnic Minority	Yao Ethnic Minority	Yi Ethnic Minority	Yugur Ethnic Minority
Zhuang Ethnic Minority				

Source: http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/china_abc/2014/08/27/content_281474983873388.htm

3.10 Political Geography

A total of 27 of China's neighbouring countries are East Asian countries (North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Mongolia), Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members (Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore) and Russia, Asian Nations (ASEAN) members

¹⁴⁷ http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/china_abc/2014/09/02/content_281474985266355.htm

(Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore) and Russia.¹⁴⁸

Geographical proximity is a key element affecting geo-economics. The mutual trust of neighbouring regions gained by ethnic and cultural similarities promotes the formation of long-term economic relations. China's economic globalization and expansion of discourse power have always been inseparable from neighbouring regions, and China's rise is changing the regional geopolitical and geo-economics pattern. The study of the geo-economics pattern among China and neighbouring countries requires a re-examination of economic cooperation-competition and the interaction between economics and politics from the perspective of interdependence.¹⁴⁹

With the end of the Cold War and development of economic globalization, international relations are increasingly determined by economic competition and geo-economics was born with the development of geopolitics. Inspired by geography, international politics, economics and strategy, geo-economics wields economic power to fulfil geostrategy, playing a key role in the reconstruction of contemporary political geographic space. Economic means are increasingly becoming the main way for many states to utilize power and achieve strategic goals. Economic blockades and sanctions, as the means of inter-country strikes, are more highly prioritized and frequent than military operations in practice due to the fact that they cost less and present fewer challenges to the international order. In addition to the conventional political discourse and military power, economic strength is increasingly concerned during the pursuit of power. Geo-economics is becoming the core of policy analysis and formulation. Based on geographical factors, geo-economics concentrates on how to influence international relations and seek national interests through the interaction between economics and politics. Geo-economics has been developed recently. The interaction between economic relations and political relations is one of the main research topics of geo-economics.¹⁵⁰

Geographical factors like historical relations, geographical proximity, convenient transportation and cooperative carriers created these countries' close political and economic contact with China.¹⁵¹

Bilateral political relations can be referred to by the level of partnership between China and neighbouring countries. The "People's Daily" categorized the relationship into three basic models in 1998: partnership, alliance, and non-alliance and non-partnership. China has no legal allies, and partnership plays a significant role in China's diplomacy. Partnership is a relationship of mutual respect, seeking common ground while reserving differences and win-win cooperation. Up to 2016, China had established variant levels of partnership with 81 of the 173 countries with which China had established diplomatic relations. There are more than ten expressions of China's foreign partnerships, and the

¹⁴⁸ Excerpts from Liang, Yi, et al. "The Spatial Evolution of Geoeconomic Pattern among China and Neighboring Countries since the Reform and Opening-Up." *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 7, Nov. 2019, p. 2168., doi:10.3390/su11072168.Pg.05. Available online at URL:

www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.Pg.02

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg. 01

¹⁵¹ Excerpts from Liang, Yi, et al. "The Spatial Evolution of Geoeconomic Pattern among China and Neighboring Countries since the Reform and Opening-Up." *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 7, Nov. 2019, p. 2168., doi:10.3390/su11072168.Pg 14. Available online at URL: www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability

bilateral political relations between China and neighbouring countries can be divided into nine grades accordingly. Twenty-two of the surrounding 27 countries had established partnerships with China, among which the China–Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation was at the top, followed by the China–Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination, and once more, the comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation with Indo–China Peninsula countries. China–India and China–South Korea strategic partnerships of cooperation ranked in fifth. Japan, North Korea, Philippines and Brunei had not established partnerships with China. The strategic relationship of mutual benefit between China and Japan focuses more on economic relations than political relations. The friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between China and North Korea is built on the basis of history. Although the North Korean nuclear test and the international political environment had caused Sino–North Korea relations to cool, the interests of the two countries are still in solidarity. In 2018, the Sino–Philippine relationship was upgraded to comprehensive strategic cooperation. Bhutan was the sole neighbouring country that had not established diplomatic relations with China.¹⁵²

“The Belt and Road Initiative”¹⁵³, which includes China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)¹⁵⁴ linking to Pakistan, caters to China’s economic transformation and industrial upgrading, as well as infrastructure construction and economic growth of countries along the route.¹⁵⁵

3.10.1 India’s position on CPEC and OBOR

Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.849 of 26.06.2019, gives India’s position as following:

Government’s position on China’s ‘One Belt One Road’ (OBOR) or ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI) has been clear and consistent. The inclusion of the so-called ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor’ (CPEC), which passes through parts of the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir under illegal occupation of Pakistan, as a flagship project of ‘OBOR/BRI’, reflects lack of appreciation of India’s concerns on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Government has conveyed to the Chinese side its concerns about their activities in Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and asked them to cease these

¹⁵² Excerpts from Liang, Yi, et al. “The Spatial Evolution of Geoeconomic Pattern among China and Neighboring Countries since the Reform and Opening-Up.” *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 7, Nov. 2019, p. 2168., doi:10.3390/su11072168.Pg 14. Available online at URL:www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability

¹⁵³ Key policy documents and BRI related projects are available online on Belt and Road portal at URL:https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/info/iList.jsp?cat_id=10059

¹⁵⁴ China’s position on CPEC can be accessed online on the following URLs:
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/yz_676205/1206_676308/1207_676320/t1130162.shtml
https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/yz_676205/1206_676308/1207_676320/t1256274.shtml

Note 1: For detailed analysis on CPEC kindly access Vivekananda India Foundation’s monograph titled “Corridor Calculus China Pakistan Economic Corridor & China’s Comprador Investment Model in Pakistan” published in 2016 available online at URL: <https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/corridor-calculus-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-and-china-s-comprador-investment-model-in-pakistan.pdf>

¹⁵⁵ Excerpts from Liang, Yi, et al. “The Spatial Evolution of Geoeconomic Pattern among China and Neighboring Countries since the Reform and Opening-Up.” *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 7, Nov. 2019, p. 2168., doi:10.3390/su11072168.Pg 14. Available online at URL:www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability

activities. Expansion and strengthening of connectivity is an integral part of India's economic and diplomatic initiatives. At the same time, Government is of the firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms. They must follow principles of openness, transparency and financial responsibility and must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of nations.¹⁵⁶

Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.606, dated 05.02.2020 gives India's position as following:¹⁵⁷

Government's consistent position in regards to transparency, openness and respect for sovereignty has also been endorsed by other countries. a)The India-USA Joint Statement 'Prosperity through Partnership' released in June 2017 called upon all nations to support bolstering regional economic connectivity through transparent development of infrastructure and the use of responsible debt financing practices, while ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law and the environment. b)The India-Japan 'Prosperity through Partnership' released in September 2017 also underlined the importance of all countries ensuring the development and use of connectivity infrastructure in an open, transparent and non-exclusive manner based on international standards and responsible debt financing practices, while ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law, and the environment. c)The European Commission issued a Joint Communication in September 2018 titled 'Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy' in which it has been highlighted that the European Union promotes an approach to connectivity, which is sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based. Connectivity has to be economically, fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable in the long term.¹⁵⁸

3.10.2 China for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative

In 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of China issued 'The Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative', with a view to synchronize development plans and promote joint actions amongst countries along the Maritime Silk Road, and set up the all-dimensional, multi-tiered and broad-scoped Blue Partnership, while jointly protecting and sustainably utilizing marine resources to achieve harmony between man and the ocean for common development and enhancement of marine welfare. China advocates the Silk Road Spirit - "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit", and exerts efforts to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the field of coasts and oceans. China is willing to work closely with countries along the Road, to build open and inclusive cooperation platforms, and establish a constructive and pragmatic Blue Partnership to forge a "blue engine" for sustainable development. Market-based operation and multi-stakeholder participation. China encourages the creation of stakeholder partnerships and promote the broad participation of governments, international organizations, civil society, and

¹⁵⁶ <https://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/31484/QUESTION+NO849+ONE+BELT+AND+ONE+ROAD+INITIATIVE>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/32353/QUESTION+NO606+BRI+AND+CPEC>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/32353/QUESTION+NO606+BRI+AND+CPEC>

industrial and commercial sectors in ocean cooperation. Joint development and benefits sharing.¹⁵⁹

1. Framework

Leveraging the ocean as the basis for enhancing common welfare, with the theme of sharing a blue space and developing the blue economy, China encourages countries along the Road to align their strategies, further all-around and pragmatic cooperation, and to jointly build unobstructed, safe and efficient maritime transport channels. In line with the priorities of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, China will deepen ocean cooperation by fostering closer ties with countries along the Road, supported by the coastal economic belt in China. Ocean cooperation will focus on building the China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean Sea Blue Economic Passage, by linking the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor, running westward from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean, and connecting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC). Efforts will also be made to jointly build the blue economic passage of China-Oceania-South Pacific, travelling southward from the South China Sea into the Pacific Ocean. Another blue economic passage is also envisioned leading up to Europe via the Arctic Ocean.

2. Green development

A China-ASEAN cooperation mechanism for marine environmental protection will be established, and cooperation implemented under the framework of the China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan. Countries along the Road are encouraged to jointly launch and implement the Plan of Green Silk Road Envoys. Strengthening international blue carbon cooperation. China proposes the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Blue Carbon Program to monitor coastal and ocean blue carbon ecosystems, develop technical standards and promote research on carbon sinks, launch the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Blue Carbon Report, and to establish an international Blue Carbon forum and cooperation mechanism.¹⁶⁰

3. Ocean-based prosperity

China is willing to work with all parties in conducting scientific surveys of navigational routes, setting up land-based monitoring stations, carrying out research on climatic and environmental changes in the Arctic. China supports efforts by countries bordering the Arctic in improving marine transportation conditions, and encourages Chinese enterprises to take part in the commercial use of the Arctic route. China is willing to carry out surveys on potential resources in the Arctic region in collaboration with relevant countries, and to strengthen cooperation in clean energy with Arctic countries. Chinese enterprises are encouraged to join in sustainable exploration of Arctic resources in a responsible way. China will actively participate in the events organized by Arctic-related international organizations.

¹⁵⁹ Excerpts from China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) vision paper titled "The Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road" published in 2015, available online at URL: http://xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm

¹⁶⁰ Excerpts from China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) vision paper titled "The Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road" published in 2015, available online at URL: http://xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm

4. Maritime security

Maritime security is a key assurance for developing the blue economy. Efforts will be made to promote the concept of common maritime security for mutual benefits. China proposes an initiative for jointly developing and sharing maritime public services along the Road, encouraging countries to jointly build ocean observation and monitoring networks, sharing the results of marine environmental surveys, and providing assistance to developing countries in this area. China is willing to strengthen cooperation in the application of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and remote sensing satellite system to provide satellite positioning and information services.

i) Cooperation on maritime navigation security. China will shoulder its due international obligations, participate in bilateral and multilateral maritime navigation security and crisis-control mechanisms, and work with all parties to combat non-traditional security issues such as crimes on the sea.

ii) Conducting joint maritime search and rescue missions. Under the frameworks of international conventions, China will shoulder its due international obligations, and strengthen information exchange and collaboration in joint search and rescue missions with countries along the Road. China proposes jointly setting up marine disaster warning systems in the South China Sea, the Bengal Sea, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and suggest jointly developing marine disaster warning products for transportation, escort, disaster prevention and mitigation. The IOC South China Sea Tsunami Advisory Center(SCSTAC) will play an active role in providing services to neighbouring countries.

iii) Strengthening cooperation in maritime law enforcement. Dialogue with countries along the Road will be intensified and differences managed. Maritime law enforcement will be boosted under bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Cooperative mechanisms for joint maritime law enforcement, fishery law enforcement, and anti-terrorism and anti-violence on the sea will be developed and improved.¹⁶¹

5. Innovative growth

i) Furthering cooperation in marine scientific research and technological development. Together with countries along the Road, China will launch a Marine Science and Technology Cooperation Partnership Initiative, jointly survey and research the key waters and passages along the Road, forecast anomalies and assess impacts by researching the interactions between monsoons and the ocean, and by conducting geoscience surveys of the continental margin of the Indian Ocean.

ii) Building platforms for marine technology cooperation. Together with countries along the Road, China will build platforms for the sharing of marine research infrastructure, data and technic resources, and marine technological cooperation parks. Efforts will be undertaken to facilitate the development of the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Centre, the East Asia Marine Cooperation Platform, the China-

¹⁶¹ Excerpts from China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) vision paper titled "The Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road" published in 2015, available online at URL: http://xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm

ASEAN Marine Cooperation Centre, the China-ASEAN College of Marine Sciences, the China-PEMSEA Sustainable Coastal Management Cooperation Centre, the China-Malaysia Joint Marine Research Centre, the China-Indonesia Centre for Ocean and Climate, the China-Thailand Joint Laboratory for Climate and Marine Ecosystem, the China-Pakistan Joint Marine Scientific Research Centre, and the China-Israel Seawater Desalination Joint Research Centre, so as to improve our capacity to achieve innovation in marine technology.

iii) Jointly building smart ocean application platforms. Marine data and information sharing among different countries will be heightened and cooperative mechanisms and networks set up among marine databases. Countries are encouraged to work together on marine data re-analysis and application, to build the Centre for Marine Meteorological and Oceanographic Climate Data, and jointly develop marine big data and cloud platform technologies so as to launch public information sharing platforms serving socio-economic development.

6. Collaborative governance

i) The Blue Partnership is an effective way for promoting ocean cooperation. Efforts will be undertaken to promote policy coordination, deepen common understanding, enhance mutual political trust, build bilateral and multilateral cooperative mechanisms and to jointly participate in ocean governance, in order to provide the institutional framework for ocean cooperation.

ii) Developing high-level dialogue mechanisms for marine affairs. Joint efforts will be undertaken towards developing high-level dialogue mechanisms among countries along the Road with the mission of implementing action plans and addressing major issues. The China-Small Island States Ocean-related Ministerial Round Table Meeting and the China-South Europe Marine Cooperation Forum will be held as planned.

iii) Jointly conducting marine spatial planning and application. Cross-border marine spatial planning for blue growth will be promoted, common principles and technical standards implemented, and best practices and evaluation methods shared. China is willing to provide technical assistance in marine spatial planning for countries along the Road, and to jointly build an international forum on marine spatial planning.

iv) Strengthening cooperation through multilateral mechanisms. The Chinese government supports the development of mechanisms for ocean cooperation and the formulation of policies and rules under the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East Asia Leaders' Meetings, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum. China will boost cooperation with multilateral cooperative organizations and support the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO), the Partnership in Environment Management of Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and the International Ocean Institute in jointly organizing and promoting major programs and projects.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Excerpts from China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) vision paper titled "The Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road"

7. China in Action

i) High-level guidance and facilitation. With the leaders of relevant states bearing witness, China has signed intergovernmental agreements, MOUs and joint statements for ocean cooperation with countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, the Maldives and South Africa.

ii) Boosting the role of cooperation platforms. Under mechanisms such as APEC, the East Asian Leaders' Meetings, and the China-ASEAN Cooperation Framework, China has launched consultations on maritime affairs and established dialogue and cooperation platforms including the Blue Economy Forum, the Seminar on Marine Environmental Protection, the Ocean Cooperation Forum, the China-ASEAN Marine Cooperation Center, and the East Asian Ocean Cooperation Platform. A series of Maritime Silk Road related activities, including the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Expo, the Maritime Silk Road International Art Festival and the Global Matsu Maritime Culture Forum, have been held in succession, thereby promoting understanding, building consensus and enhancing ocean cooperation.

iii) Increasing financial investment. The Chinese government has mobilized domestic resources and set up the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund and the China-Indonesia Maritime Cooperation Fund. We have also implemented The Framework Plan for International Cooperation for the South China Sea and its Adjacent Oceans. Meanwhile, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund have provided capital support for major ocean cooperation programs.

iv) China's regions promoting opening-up. In the spirit of enhancing pragmatic cooperation with countries along the Road, the Chinese government has encouraged economic zones such as the Bohai Rim, the Yangtze River Delta, the west coast of the Taiwan Straits, the Pearl River Delta and coastal port cities, to leverage local advantages and further open up. The Chinese government has supported the Fujian Province in becoming a core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and promoted the development of the Zhejiang Marine Economy Development Demonstration Zone, the Fujian Marine Economic Pilot Zone and the Zhoushan Archipelago New Area. Efforts have also been made to promote Hainan Province as an international tourism island, and to establish demonstration zones for marine economic development and demonstration cities for ocean-based innovative growth.

v) Projects being implemented. Progress has been achieved in implementing a series of programs and projects, including the Malaysia Malacca Seaside Industrial Park, the Pakistan Gwadar Port, the port+industrial park +city mode of integrated development of the Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar, the Colombo Port City and the Phase II Hambantota Port Project in Sri Lanka, the railway linking Ethiopia and Djibouti, the railway between Mombasa and Nairobi in Kenya, and the Piraeus port in Greece. China is collaborating with the Netherlands in developing offshore wind power generation and with Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Iran in implementing seawater desalination projects. The connectivity of submarine communication has been remarkably enhanced and the Asia-Pacific Gateway

Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” published in 2015, available online at URL: http://xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm

(APG) submarine optical fiber cable is officially up and running. The industrial parks in China's Qinzhou and Malaysia's Kuantan, the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia and the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperative Zone in Egypt, are currently under construction, and have achieved remarkable progress.¹⁶³

3.10.3 China and the Arctic

China is an important stakeholder in Arctic affairs. Geographically, China is a “Near-Arctic State”, one of the continental States that are closest to the Arctic Circle. The natural conditions of the Arctic and their changes have a direct impact on China’s climate system and ecological environment, and, in turn, on its economic interests in agriculture, forestry, fishery, marine industry and other sectors. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China shoulders the important mission of jointly promoting peace and security in the Arctic. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative), an important cooperation initiative of China, will bring opportunities for parties concerned to jointly build a “Polar Silk Road”, and facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic and social development of the Arctic.¹⁶⁴

In May 2018, European Parliamentary Research Service published a paper titled “China’s Arctic Policy: How China aligns rights and interests” which analysed China’s white paper and vision paper on its Arctic policy. The paper details the following:

a) Challenging the Arctic states' status quo approach to Arctic regionalism?

The 2008 Ilulissat Declaration enshrines the legally non-binding agreement between what are known as the five Arctic Ocean littoral states, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the USA, that the existing legal framework for Arctic governance is sufficient and that there is no need for a new legal instrument such as an Arctic Treaty. The Declaration expresses the Arctic coastal states' endorsement of Arctic regionalism, which non-Arctic states pursuing an international approach to Arctic governance may see as an effort to limit their influence. In this context, China could incrementally deploy a revisionist power approach by seeking changes in or additions to the existing regional governance framework or lobby for an Arctic Treaty to better accommodate its own interests. The white paper seems to advocate the transformation of the Arctic's governance from regional to global, as has previously been proposed by Chinese scholars. If formalised, this would dilute the power of the Arctic states and grant non-Arctic states (given its economic weight, in practice, particularly China), a bigger say than at present. Specialists argue that the Arctic's continued fragmented regional governance system and the growing interest of non-Arctic states in engaging the region may support China's push towards considering the Arctic as an international rather than regional issue. The Arctic Ocean as a 'common heritage of mankind' English translations of past statements made by high-ranking Chinese officials sparked criticism. The white paper therefore draws a

¹⁶³Excerpts from China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the State Oceanic Administration’s (SOA) vision paper titled “The Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” published in 2015, available online at URL: http://xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm

¹⁶⁴ Excerpts from China’s State Council Information Office White paper, titled “China’s Arctic policy” published on January 26, 2018 available online at URL: http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm

distinction between the Arctic Ocean littoral states' sovereign rights and the rights of non- Arctic states to resource extraction and fishing in the Arctic Ocean under UNCLOS, stressing that the above concept refers to the high seas and the international seabed. China and the overlapping claims of Arctic states as regards the continental shelf limits China has not expressed an opinion on the scientific claims submitted to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) for evaluation by several Arctic coastal states – to extend their outer continental shelves to the North Pole. China is obviously interested in a narrow interpretation of these claims and the largest possible interpretation of maritime space in the Arctic Ocean considered as the high seas and international seabed, where non-Arctic states have the same rights as Arctic states.¹⁶⁵

b) Extending the OBOR initiative into the Arctic

The white paper formally embeds China's Arctic policies in its 2013 OBOR initiative, meanwhile renamed in English 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), which therefore becomes a global undertaking and consolidates China's maritime policy. This follows on the heels of the publication of China's 'Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative' in June 2017. It adds two new 'blue economic passages' to the existing 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which connects Chinese and European ports via the Indian Ocean and the Suez Canal: the China-Oceania-South Pacific passage and the 'Polar Silk Road', linking China and Europe via the Arctic Ocean . The idea of Chinese-Russian cooperation in Arctic navigation can be traced back to 2015, after President Xi Jinping announced China's aspiration of becoming a 'polar great power' during a visit to Hobart, Australia, in 2014. Bilateral cooperation for instance is ongoing as regards rail and port facilities at Arkhangelsk in the north of Russia. Compared to the 2018 white paper, China's 2017 vision paper is much more assertive and comprehensive in proposing maritime cooperation in different areas, both based on existing cooperation formats including the China-South Europe Marine Cooperation Forum, and platforms for new policy areas still to be created. The advantage of the integration of China's Arctic policy into its flagship foreign policy initiative seems to be that it enables China, despite its limited Arctic rights, to act from a position of strength by offering cooperation to Arctic and non- Arctic states under a China- centred project based on Chinese goals and principles. China thereby offsets its lack of territorial sovereignty and related sovereign rights through its ability to finance large-scale Arctic development projects and its unique capability of 'encouraging' Chinese companies to implement the government's long-term Arctic policies.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Excerpts from the European Parliament's paper titled "China's Arctic Policy: How China aligns rights and interests" published on May,2018, available online at URL:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/620231/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)620231_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/620231/EPRS_BRI(2018)620231_EN.pdf)

¹⁶⁶ Excerpts from the European Parliament's paper titled "China's Arctic Policy: How China aligns rights and interests" published on May,2018, available online at URL:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/620231/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)620231_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/620231/EPRS_BRI(2018)620231_EN.pdf)

3.10.4 'One China Policy' and China's Special Administrative Regions (SAR)

3.10.4.1. Taiwan-"One China Policy"

Settlement of the Taiwan issue and realization of the complete reunification of China embodies the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation. From 1979, the Chinese government has striven for the peaceful reunification of China in the form of "one country, two systems". Unfortunately, from the 1990s, Lee Teng-hui, the leader of the Taiwan authorities, has progressively betrayed the One-China Principle, striving to promote a separatist policy with "two Chinas" at the core, going so far as to openly describe the cross-Straits relations as "state to state relations, or at least special state to state relations." This action has seriously damaged the basis for peaceful reunification of the two sides, harmed the fundamental interests of the entire Chinese nation. The Chinese government has consistently adhered to the One-China Principle and resolutely opposed any attempt to separate Taiwan from China. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China.

In October 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted at its 26th session Resolution 2758, which expelled the representatives of the Taiwan authorities¹⁶⁷ and restored the seat and all the lawful rights of the government of the PRC in the United Nations. Up to now, 161 countries have established diplomatic relations with the PRC; they all acknowledge the One-China Principle and promise to handle their relations with Taiwan within the one-China framework.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ The ROC's claim of legitimacy was dealt a serious blow after 1970 with its loss of UN representation and diplomatic recognition by most of the world's countries. Still, Taiwan remained viable and emerged as a global economic powerhouse, its security guaranteed by a commitment from the United States and backed by U.S. military presence in the region. The continued American involvement in Taiwan affairs has at times been a source of friction in U.S.-China relations. Through all this, economic ties improved considerably between the mainland and Taiwan. Taiwan has become one of China's major trading partners. Beijing has continued to press for reintegrating Taiwan as a province of China under mainland administration. However, there has been a sustained movement on Taiwan advocating that the island become an independent sovereign state and not continue to be considered a part of China. Tensions escalated after the pro-independence Chen Shui-bian was elected president of the ROC in 2000. Nonetheless, discussions continued between the two sides, and in 2005 high-ranking Nationalist Party (KMT) officials travelled to the mainland, the first such visits since 1949. Tensions between China and Taiwan eased significantly after the Nationalists regained control of both Taiwan's legislature and presidency in 2008. A notable accomplishment of these discussions was a trade agreement, signed in 2010, that would gradually reduce or eliminate tariffs on a large number of goods and commodities exported from one side to the other.

Note:2 For more information on the United States evolving position on Taiwan Issue please access, The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress of United States Congress issued a report titled 'China/Taiwan: Evolution of the "One China" Policy-Key Statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei' published January 5,2015, is available online at URL: <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30341.html>

¹⁶⁸ Excerpts from China's State Council Information Office White paper, titled "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue" published on February 21, 2000 available online at URL: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>

Note 3:The response to the White Paper from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China, can be accessed online at URL: https://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=0E7B91A8FBEC4A94&s=F5186954BBC176BA

India's Position on Taiwan

India has been, since 1949, supporting People's Republic of China's "One China Policy". In November 21, 2006, during a State visit, President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh held talks and issued a Joint Declaration, (by the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China) stating the following that the Indian side recalls that India was among the first countries to recognize that there is one China and that its one China policy has remained unaltered. The Indian side states that it would continue to abide by its one China policy.¹⁶⁹

3.10.4.2 Macau Special Administrative Region

History of Macau

The first Portuguese ship anchored in the Pearl River estuary in 1513, and further Portuguese visits followed regularly. Trade with China commenced in 1553. Four years later Portuguese paying tribute to China settled in Macau, which became the official and principal entrepôt for all international trade with China and Japan and an intermediary port for ships traveling from Lisbon to Nagasaki (at the time, Japan's only out port for trade). China, nonetheless, still refused to recognize Portuguese sovereignty over the territory. The first governor was appointed in the 17th century, but the Portuguese remained largely under the control of the Chinese. Missionaries carried over on Portuguese ships transformed Macau into an East Asian centre of Christianity. Even though China's trade with the outside world was gradually centralized in Guangzhou (Canton) toward the end of the 18th century, merchants were allowed into Guangzhou only during the trading season—from November to May—and the international merchant community established itself at Macau. By the mid-19th century the British colony of Hong Kong had surpassed Macau in trade, and within a few years the merchants had largely deserted the Portuguese possession, which never again was a major entrepôt.

In the 1930s and '40s Macau, declared a neutral territory during the Sino-Japanese War and World War II, became a refuge for both Chinese and Europeans. The Chinese population in the territory continued to grow when the communist government assumed power in China in 1949. In 1951 Portugal officially made Macau an overseas province. Following a military coup in Portugal in 1974, the government allotted more administrative autonomy and economic independence to the territory. The constitution promulgated in 1976 established the Legislative Assembly, which was dominated by the minority Portuguese. Until diplomatic relations were solidified between Portugal and the communist government in China in 1979, discussions on transferring Macau to Chinese control were fruitless.

In March 1984 the Portuguese governor dissolved the assembly in response to opposition within the government to extend the right to vote to the Chinese majority. A few months later new elections, which included Chinese suffrage, finally brought a significant number

¹⁶⁹<https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/6363/Joint+Declaration+by+the+Republic+of+India>

of Chinese deputies into the government. In April 1987 Portugal and China reached an agreement to return Macau to Chinese rule in 1999, using the Hong Kong Joint Declaration between Britain and China as a model. They agreed to provisions under the Basic Law that would ensure the autonomy of Macau for 50 years after the start of Chinese rule. These included Macau's right to elect local leaders, the right of its residents to travel freely, and the right to maintain its way of life, both economically and socially. Defense and foreign policy matters were to be administered by China, and those living in Macau without Portuguese passports would become Chinese citizens. Elections continued to turn out record numbers of voters and a Chinese majority legislature. On December 20, 1999, Macau became a special administrative region under Chinese sovereignty, as Hong Kong had in 1997. The period since reunification has been peaceful and marked by increasing prosperity. Much of the region's economic growth has come from the tremendous expansion in gambling and gaming since 2000, which transformed Macau into one of the world's largest gambling centres (in terms of revenue). Tourism also has risen sharply from levels in the 1990s.

Major infrastructure projects have included continued land reclamation throughout the region and a third bridge (opened 2005) between Macau Peninsula and Taipa Island. The political situation has been stable, with orderly legislative elections. Ho Hau Wah (Edmund Ho) was named Macau's first chief executive at reunification in 1999; he was re-elected to a second term in 2004. In 2009 Chui Sai On was elected president, succeeding Hau. By the mid-2010s his administration was facing a sharp decline in gaming revenues.¹⁷⁰



Political Structure of Macau SAR.

Macao People ruling Macao with a High Degree of Autonomy Macao became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China on 20 December 1999. Its

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Macau-administrative-region-China#ref93747>

constitutional document, the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR), came into force on the same day. The Basic Law of the MSAR stipulates the system to be practised in Macao, and lays down the political and administrative framework of the MSAR for 50 years from 1999. The systems and policies of the MSAR - including its social and economic systems; safeguards for the fundamental rights and freedoms of its residents; the executive, legislature and judiciary; and Government policies - are all based on the provisions of the Basic Law. The principles of “One country, two systems”, “Macao people governing Macao” and “a high degree of autonomy” are being successfully implemented, and are now broadly recognised in Macao and infused into its social and political culture. The principle of “Macao people ruling Macao” means that the people of Macao govern Macao. The Chief Executive, principal officials, members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly, the President of the Court of Final Appeal and the Procurator-General of the MSAR must be permanent residents of the Region. Some of these posts can only be assumed by Chinese citizens who are also permanent residents in Macao. A high degree of autonomy means that the National People’s Congress (NPC) of China authorises the MSAR to exercise a high degree of autonomy in line with the Basic Law of the MSAR, and the Central People’s Government will not interfere in the affairs that fall within the scope of autonomy of the MSAR.

The high degree of autonomy to be exercised by the MSAR includes the administrative power, legislative power and independent judicial power, which includes the power of final adjudication, as well as other powers bestowed by the NPC, the NPC Standing Committee and the Central People’s Government. But a high degree of autonomy does not mean complete autonomy. To safeguard China’s unification and uphold state sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Central People’s Government retains necessary power over the MSAR. For instance, the Central People’s Government shall be responsible for the foreign affairs and defence relating to the MSAR.¹⁷¹

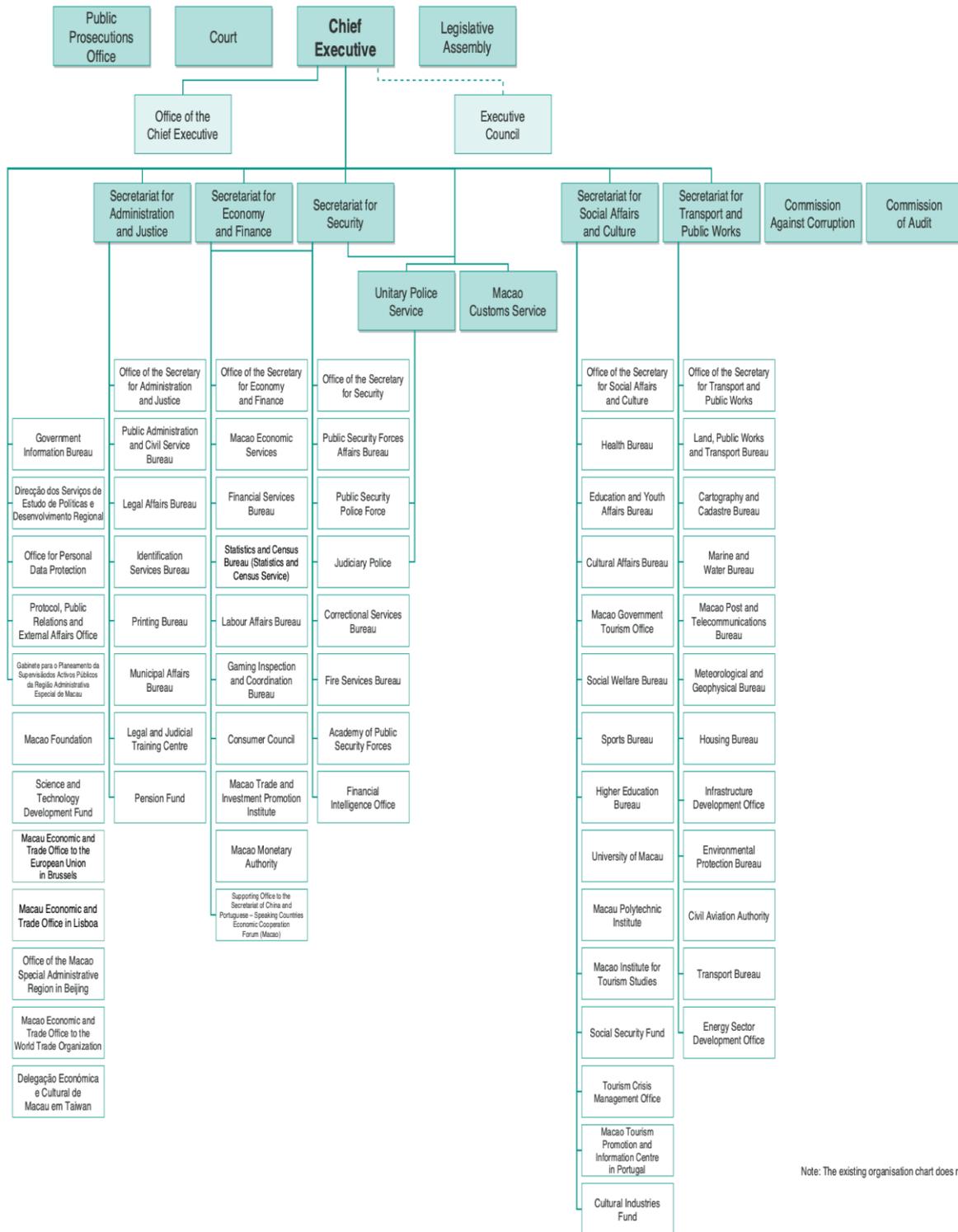
Executive Authorities in Macau

The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region is the executive authority of the MSAR. The Chief Executive is the head of the Government, and general secretariats, directorates of services, departments and divisions are established in the MSAR Government. The principal officials of Macao shall be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the region and have ordinarily resided in Macao for a continuous period of not less than 15 years. The MSAR Government is responsible for formulating and implementing policies; conducting administrative affairs; conducting external affairs as authorised by the Central People’s Government under the Basic Law of the MSAR; drawing up and introducing budgets and final accounts; introducing bills and motions and drafting administrative regulations; and designating officials to sit in on the meetings of the Legislative Assembly to hear opinions or to speak on behalf of the Government. The MSAR Government must abide by the law and be accountable to the Legislative Assembly; it shall implement laws passed by the Legislative Assembly and those already in force; it shall present regular policy addresses to the Legislative Assembly; and it shall answer

¹⁷¹ https://www.gcs.gov.mo/files/factsheet/Politics_EN.pdf

For detailed information on the economic, geographical and political structure of Macau, kindly access the following URL: <https://www.gov.mo/en/about-macao-sar/fact-sheet/>

questions raised by members of the Legislative Assembly. The Chief Executive is the head of the MSAR and is accountable to the Central People's Government and the MSAR.¹⁷²



Note: The existing organisation chart does not cover...

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Source: https://www.gov.mo/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/11/GovOrgChart_en-8.svg

¹⁷² https://www.gcs.gov.mo/files/factsheet/Politics_EN.pdf

3.10.4.3 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

The Chinese government resumed exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong

The Hong Kong issue was left over from history. Hong Kong (including the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories) has been a part of China's territory since the ancient times. Britain launched the Opium War against China in 1840 and compelled the Qing government to sign the Treaty of Nanking, permanently ceding the Hong Kong Island to it. Britain and France launched the Second Opium War in 1856. In 1860, Britain forced the Qing government to sign the Convention of Peking, permanently ceding to it the southern tip of the Kowloon Island. In 1898, exploiting the establishment of sphere of influence in China by imperialist powers, Britain again forced the Qing government to sign the Kowloon Extension Agreement, "leasing" large area of land north of the Boundary Street of the Kowloon Island and over 200 islets nearby (later called the New Territories) for a term of 99 years until June 30, 1997. The Chinese people have always been opposed to these three unequal treaties.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government took a consistent position over Hong Kong: Hong Kong is a part of China's territory. China does not recognize the three unequal treaties imposed on it by imperialism. The Hong Kong issue should be resolved through negotiation when conditions permit, and the existing status of Hong Kong should be maintained pending a solution.

After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in 1978, the Chinese people endeavoured to turn China into a modern socialist country, bring about the country's reunification and oppose hegemonism. Deng Xiaoping put forward the concept of "one country, two systems" for resolving the issues of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. With the approaching of 1997, Britain was anxious to learn about China's position on resolving the Hong Kong issue. It thus became possible to settle the Hong Kong issue.

Deng Xiaoping met Mrs. Thatcher on September 24, 1982, after the Chinese premier held talks with her. The Chinese leaders officially informed Britain that the Chinese government had decided to recover the whole area of Hong Kong in 1997 and stated that China would adopt special policies on Hong Kong after it is recovered. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region would be set up. Hong Kong would be governed by the people of Hong Kong. The existing social and economic systems in Hong Kong and its way of life would remain unchanged.

Deng said: "Our stand on Hong Kong is explicit. Three issues are involved here. First is the issue of sovereignty. The second is that in what way China will administer Hong Kong after 1997 to ensure its prosperity. The third is that the Chinese and British governments should have consultations to ensure that no major disturbances occur in Hong Kong in the 15 years leading to 1997." Deng pointed out that "sovereignty is not negotiable." He said that "the political and economic systems and even the majority of the laws currently in force in Hong Kong may continue." "Capitalism will continue to be practiced in Hong Kong." He suggested that "in accordance with the basic policies of the Chinese government on the Hong Kong issue, the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be directly under the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China."

With the exception of foreign affairs and defense, which are the responsibilities of the Central People's Government, the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The Central People's Government will station troops in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to conduct defense. The government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be composed of local inhabitants agreement be reached by two sides to begin consultation on the issue of Hong Kong. The premise is that China will recover Hong Kong in 1997. On this basis, consultation can be conducted on how to ensure the smooth transition in the next 15 years and on how Hong Kong will function after the 15 year transitional period."

The British government declared that "the Government of the United Kingdom will restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China with effect from 1 July 1997." On May 27, 1985, the Chinese and British governments exchanged instruments of ratification, and the Sino-British Joint Declaration formally entered into force. Following the signing of the Joint Declaration, Hong Kong entered the transitional period. At midnight, June 30, 1997, the Chinese and British governments held a power transferring ceremony in Hong Kong at which the Chinese government formally resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. Hong Kong's return to China marks the success of applying Deng Xiaoping's concept of "one country, two systems" to resolve the Hong Kong issue and an important step forward in the cause of China's reunification.¹⁷³

Hong Kong and the Transfer to China: Issues and Prospects

In June 1997, Australian Parliament issued a brief titled "Hong Kong and the Transfer to China: Issues and Prospects", which illustrates the following:

Hong Kong has been economically transformed over the last thirty. Its success has been based on acting as a conduit of expertise and capital between China and the outside world, thus playing a key role in China's recent economic growth. For many years there were fears that when China assumed control it would kill the goose that laid the golden egg. These fears subsided, however, when China developed the principle of 'one country, two systems', under which Hong Kong will maintain its separate economic and political system under Chinese sovereignty. The main concern is not that there will be an abrupt change of policy but that the culture of corruption and *guanxi* (connections) in China will slowly undermine the open conduct of business and legal affairs in the territory.¹⁷⁴

While a free market enclave presents few major problems for the Chinese leadership, it is less certain that it will be able to tolerate an autonomous region with a culture of free political expression. The British and Chinese Governments agreed to political autonomy in the Joint Declaration of 1984 whose principles were incorporated by China into its Basic Law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). The two governments, however, interpreted the principles differently and the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 led the people of Hong Kong to press for guarantees of their political freedom after the handover. The last Governor of Hong Kong, Mr Chris Patten, introduced some political

¹⁷³ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18032.shtml

¹⁷⁴ Excerpts from the paper published in June, 1997 by Australian Parliament titled 'Hong Kong and the Transfer to China: Issues and Prospects', available online at URL: https://www.aph.gov.au/sitecore/content/Home/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9697/97cib33

reforms in the early 1990s, most notably the introduction of popular elections for the territory's Legislative Council (Legco). The Chinese Government, however, has rejected these reforms as inconsistent with the Joint Declaration and Basic Law and has established an appointed Provisional Legislative Council which will take over from the elected Legco on 1 July 1997. The limited British reforms have proved too belated to make China feel obliged to accept them.

Just as Britain neglected electoral reform until the last moment, it did not extend its generally good record on respect for civil liberties in the territory to include Hong Kong in the international regime for the protection of human rights. Only after the Tiananmen Square massacre was a Bill of Rights enacted in 1991. China is not a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The new Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR, Mr Tung Chee-Hwa, appointed by China, has foreshadowed various restrictions on political activity, although he appears to have modified his proposals in response to criticism in Hong Kong. China did agree to an independent-minded judge becoming the new Chief Justice.

China will probably send contradictory signals about its intentions on political and legal issues in Hong Kong, because of uncertainty about how to deal with a unique arrangement and because of divisions between reformers and conservatives within the Party and the Army. A lot will depend upon the political adroitness of the Chief Executive in balancing the demands of different factions in Beijing with those of interest groups in Hong Kong.

The controversy about China's installation of an unelected Provisional Legislative Council, and the different position on the issue taken by Australia, Britain and the US, highlights the fact that political problems in Hong Kong after 1997 will not only potentially be a cause of friction between Australia and China but may also have implications for Australia's other relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly with the US.

The best prospects for Hong Kong lie in the fact that continued prosperity in the territory is in China's interest and that the Chinese leadership is keen to use Hong Kong as an example or 'trial run' in its efforts towards reunification with Taiwan and in its general foreign relations. It is critical that Beijing acts in the realisation that the distinct character of Hong Kong means that it must be governed differently from the rest of China or a mass exodus of skilled people and capital will undermine the viability of the territory.¹⁷⁵

Hong Kong has been under China's control, territorially and administratively. In fact, Hong Kong has also increasingly fallen into China's economic orbit. It is only a matter of time before Hong Kong's political system follows. The transitory promise to Hong Kong of "one country, two systems" is good for 50 years only, a blink of an eye in historical terms. To take a fatalistic view, all the liberal rights Hong Kong protesters are fighting for were handed over when Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. China is not likely to grant Hong Kong liberal democracy under its model of universal suffrage. Nor will

¹⁷⁵ Excerpts from the paper published in June, 1997 by Australian Parliament titled 'Hong Kong and the Transfer to China: Issues and Prospects', available online at URL: https://www.aph.gov.au/sitecore/content/Home/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9697/97cib33

China allow Hong Kong to break free, not under Xi Jinping's leadership nor anyone else's. To Xi, Hong Kong is indubitably under China's control; it is only a question of wielding hard power or soft power. Chinese state-owned enterprises have been asked to play a bigger role in Hong Kong since September. The message is clear: only state-owned companies can be fully trusted. To secure control of Hong Kong's political future¹⁷⁶, the business sector must follow the Communist Party – all businesses, domestic or foreign. Xi Jinping's Chinese dream is the narrative of a strong China, predicated on a unified national identity and the collective memory of a century of humiliation. Hong Kong is a quintessential part of this narrative, and of the Chinese dream.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ In 2019, when an estimated 1 million people took to the streets on June 9, they only had one demand: the withdrawal of the hated extradition bill, which would have allowed the transfer of fugitives to jurisdictions with which Hong Kong does not have such an agreement, including mainland China. But as confrontations with police escalated and the movement morphing into a wide anti-government campaign, protesters came up with five demands. Apart from the complete withdrawal of the bill - which the government finally fulfilled on September 4 - protesters are also calling for an independent probe into police action; amnesty for arrested protesters; a halt to categorising the protests as riots and universal suffrage.

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3032733/china-would-rather-see-hong-kong-lose-its-role-financial-gateway>