

Chapter 3

“China’s 70-Year Development and the Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind”: A Croatian Perspective



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I am honoured to speak at the globally distinguished Hongqiao International Economic Forum. China has so many extraordinary economists and economic institutes whose economic models have proved themselves in practice. China’s experts have had an indispensable impact on China’s economic growth that is well grounded despite current unprecedented challenges to it, like America’s trade war on China. From the 1990s to now the World Bank and other global financial institutions predicted China’s GDP would grow no more than 5% annually from 1994 to 2015. China’s potential for growth has often been underestimated though it has shown that it is here to stay.

I would like to congratulate China’s hard-working people, leaders, and experts on a remarkable 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China. They were and are central driving forces behind China’s transformation to a middle-income country and, together with the United States, the leading power in technology and artificial intelligence.

I would also like to thank to express my gratitude to the amazing Chinese Academy of Social Sciences that brought me here to beautiful Shanghai.

This International Economic Forum is taking place under the framework of the Second China International Import Expo (CIIE) that appears to me as China’s very concrete and generous answer to the tendency of protectionism in the world. I wish that Germany would do something similar in Europe.

I understand the last 70 years of China, from the Revolution in 1949 to 2019, as a path of reform (*gaige*) and China’s struggle to change and to remember. Recently, the renowned sinologist and historian Wang Gungwu said, at the launch of *Think China* magazine in Singapore, “China’s reforms don’t contradict to the communist revolution—they consolidate it.”

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There are many Chinese economic achievements, unprecedented in human history, that have to be admired but I am most impressed with China's achievements in poverty reduction under the banner of socialism. In the history of humankind, the most successful country in terms of poverty elimination is China. After China's forty years of development 850 million Chinese were lifted out of poverty. According to the World Bank China has contributed more than 70% to global poverty reduction. China's middle class has grown to 420 million.

I hope next year in Stockholm will be different and that the fascinating results of China's economists and leadership will be awarded the Nobel prize.

Now I will take this opportunity for providing my views on China's project, named the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.

Currently, China seems to me to be the only country in the world that pursues a global vision of constructing the better world for all people.

China's passion and devotion to reform itself supports my deep belief that China has the capacity to carry out world order closer to a community based on stronger multi-polarity, and new multilateralism based on shared development. These processes have already started with the Belt and Road Initiative envisioned by President of China Xi Jinping.

I share the opinion of Professor Yan Xuetong, the Dean of the Institute of International Relations, Tsinghua University that for every country it is essential what kind of leadership it has. China's leaders with their ideas of development, experience, pragmatism, and the ability to think strategically locally, nationally, and globally have been essential for China's historical success.

In past 40 years, I have witnessed China's leaders' ability not just to make any kind of development but also to move the country further from being the world factory to the laboratory of the world and the leader in the 5G economy. Achieving economic development is one of the main responsibilities of every government. The wellbeing of the people and peace are the fundamental goals of development.

I met with President of China Xi Jinping several times in China during several high-level conferences and forums. I am not here to say who is a historic figure and who is not, but ideas, values, and the work that President Xi Jinping has put into his foreign policy strategy called Belt and Road Initiative, I see as historic for China and the world.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a project that came to us from the future!

The BRI epitomizes a new kind of relationship between China and the world and as such is a major platform for building a community with a shared future in the new era.

I have attended many forums on the Belt and Road Initiative in China and Europe and have read many articles and books on it, and I would absolutely agree with the globally renowned foreign policy expert Wang Yiwei's analysis that behind the Belt and Road Initiative is China's efforts to connect the world.

President Xi's global community with a shared future seems to me to be a concept that has strength to change the very structure of the world order that has been based for centuries on power politics.

This project for the world is absolutely new and will need a long time to eliminate the barriers brought to the world by geopolitics, eliminate the pain caused by poverty, colonialism, neoliberalism, unfairness, protectionism, and populism and to create a path of development that is in accordance with sustainable development and people’s aspirations for a better life.

I have been visited China many times and seen with my own eyes China’s ability to create amazing economic and social progress for itself and the world.

That is why I am optimistic that China together with other countries will build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.

Thank you for your attention.