

CHRONOLOGY

The following outline chronology covers some of the key events discussed in this book.

2017

1 January: China's ban on trading ivory and ivory products comes into effect. (See Forum 'The End of Ivory', pp.171–174).

9 January: Altering long-standing arrangements, the Vatican and China reach a deal to allow the Pope to have some say over the appointment of Catholic bishops.

13 January: The US Drug Enforcement Administration's Acting Administrator Chuck Rosenberg meets with officials in China to discuss the control of synthetic drugs. Carfentanil, a powerful

synthetic opioid, is banned in China in February.

17 January: At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, President Xi Jinping makes a speech defending free trade, and restates China's commitment to the 2015 Paris climate accord.

17 January: China, Australia, and Malaysia suspend their search for Malaysian Airlines flight MH370, missing since March 2014. (See *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, Information Window 'MH370', pp.66–67).

18 January: The first direct train from China to the UK arrives in London after a seventeen-day journey. On 29 April, the first train running in the opposite direction arrives in Yiwu with thirty containers of British-made goods.

22 January: 111 golf courses are ordered to shut due to illegal water use. The recent decline in golf's popularity has been attributed to the implementation of stricter anti-corruption rules.

27 January: Chinese Canadian billionaire Xiao Jianhua 肖建华 is seized from a luxury Hong Kong hotel and extradited to China. As of February 2018, Xiao's whereabouts remain unknown.

19 February: Implementing existing United Nations sanctions following North Korean missile tests, China announces the suspension of coal imports until the end of the year.

19 February: Despite warnings from China's Foreign Ministry, a US aircraft carrier strike group — including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson — begins patrols in the South China Sea.

20 February: As part of anti-terrorism activities, drivers in the Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang are required to install the China-made Beidou 北斗 satellite tracking devices in their cars.

22 February: US officials suggest that new buildings on the Spratly Islands may be launch sites for surface-to-air missiles. In August, Vietnamese officials criticise China's opening of a cinema on one of the contested Paracel Islands.

3 March: The South Korean government suspects China of restricting outbound tourism in response to it hosting the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) missile defence system. The effects of this blockade continue over the year, with the automotive, culture, retail, and cosmetics industries all suffering decreased sales.

4 March: China announces plans to increase military spending by seven per cent — accounting for 1.3 per cent of projected GDP in 2017.

6 March: Violence between Myanmar troops and Kokang rebels in northern Myanmar causes 20,000 to seek refuge in China.

19 March: New US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visits Beijing, meeting with Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Chinese commentators praise him for seeing China as an equal, while he draws criticism from some in the US for parroting Chinese phrases.

19 March: Taiwanese civil rights activist Lee Ming-che 李明哲 is detained as he enters China from Macau. Formally arrested in May, in November he was found guilty of ‘subverting state power’ and sentenced to five years’ prison. In January 2018, his Taiwanese wife was prevented from entering China to visit him in prison. (See Chapter 8, ‘Human Rights in the Age of Prosperity’, pp.254–269.)

21 March: Among other outcomes from the National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang announced the lowest economic growth target in twenty years—6.5 per cent.

23 March: Li Keqiang arrives in Australia for a five-day visit to discuss regional security and trade.

28 March: The Australian Government announces it is not proceeding with the Chinese extradition treaty. Despite

being concluded in 2007, concerns over China’s rule of law and omitting a guarantee to not approve extradition that would be ‘unjust or oppressive’ stopped the treaty from being ratified.

1 April: ‘Abnormal’ beards and face coverings are banned in Xinjiang. These rules, along with other measures to strengthen state ideology, are a part of anti-extremist laws.

1 April: Dr Feng Chongyi 冯崇义 of the University of Technology Sydney, a permanent resident of Australia, returns to Sydney after a week-long detention in China. In China for research, Dr Feng was detained at Guangzhou airport. He was made to agree not to disclose details about his questioning.

1 April: Plans are announced for the Xiongnan New Area, to be built near Beijing. (See Chapter 6, ‘Magic Cities, Future Dreams — Urban Contradictions’, pp.186–205.)

6 April: Xi Jinping meets US President Donald Trump for the first time, with the summit taking place at Trump’s Florida resort Mar-a-lago.

11 April: Amnesty International releases a report listing China as the world's leading executioner. (See Forum 'Death Penalty Reform', pp.275–278.)

13 April: A Chinese consortium purchases the Italian football club AC Milan from former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. In February 2018, consortium leader and new club Chair Li Yonghong 李勇鸿 denies claims that his companies were facing bankruptcy.

17 April: China launches its first unmanned spacecraft — the *Tianzhou 1* 天舟一号 — from a site on Hainan island. Its destination is the crewless space station *Tiangong 2* 天宫二号.

19 April: An arrest warrant is issued for New York-based billionaire Guo Wengui 郭文贵 after he offers information about corruption in China. Guo continued to draw the attention of the media and politicians throughout 2017. (See Chapter 5, 'Precarious Wealth: The Search for Status and Security', pp.148–165.)

24 April: A factory producing products for Ivanka Trump's fashion brand is found to provide workers with bad conditions and low wages.

26 April: China launches its first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning* 辽宁舰. Leaving Dalian for its maiden voyage, the 50,000 ton Soviet-made vessel sails to Hong Kong, where it is a feature of events celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China.

1 May: Chinese diplomats interrupt the opening ceremony of the Kimberly Process meeting in Perth to seek the ejection of Taiwanese observers. Dealing with the diamond trade, Australia invited the Taiwanese in line with earlier precedent but withdrew the invitation after the Chinese protest.

1 May: The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region celebrates its seventieth anniversary.

7 May: A real estate company linked to Jarrod Kushner, White House advisor and son-in-law of Donald Trump, holds events in China offering potential investors the chance to receive immigrant visas.

11 May: Up to nine are killed and twenty are injured after a 5.5-magnitude earthquake in Xinjiang.

14 May: A two-day Belt and Road summit in Beijing attracts twenty-eight world leaders and representatives from seventy countries. (See Chapter 2, 'The Belt and Road Initiative: How to Win Friends and Influence People', pp.42–59.)

15 May: The Australian Football League plays its first game in China, with the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide Power facing off in Shanghai.

17 May: The Australian government supports Taiwan's attendance at the World Health Assembly — the World Health Organisation's most important meeting. However, due to Chinese pressure, Taiwan was excluded for the first time since 2009.

23 May: The Google artificial intelligence program AlphaGo beats world number one Go player Ke Jie 柯洁.

23 May: Bollywood film *Dangal* tops Chinese box office for two weeks. Starring Aamir Khan, it becomes China's highest grossing non-Hollywood foreign film.

25 May: US warship *USS Dewey* sails within twelve miles of Mischief Reef — territory claimed by China in the South China Sea.

1 June: New regulations require content on news websites in China to be approved by local and national authorities. (See Forum 'Arguing with Robots', pp.249–252.)

2 June: Connecting to the local power grid in May, the world's largest floating solar power plant opens in Anhui. Producing forty megawatts of electricity, the plant floats atop a flooded and collapsed former coal mine.

3 June: A theme park dedicated to Argentinian football superstar Lionel Messi and offering fans an immersive experience is announced to open in China in 2020.

6 June: The joint Fairfax–ABC episode of *Four Corners* called 'Power and Influence: The Hard Edge of China's Soft Power' raises questions about Chinese state influence in Australia. (See Chapter 4, 'China's Power, the United States, and the Future of Australia', pp.110–125).

6 June: Governor of California, Jerry Brown, meets with Xi Jinping to sign an agreement to expand trade, especially on technology that mitigates climate change.

12 June: Panama switches diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China — the first country to do so since Sao Tome and Principe in 2016.

1 July: Xi Jinping spends three days in Hong Kong for a series of events held to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the transfer of control of Hong Kong to China. (See Chapter 9, 'Prosperity and Freedom: Hong Kong's Dilemma', pp.292–307.)

3 July: In a setback to the Chinese space program, the second launch of the *Long March 5* rocket fails.

12 July: Ten employees of Crown Resorts, including two Australians, are released from a Chinese prison. They were among nineteen Crown employees arrested in October 2016 for attempting to attract high-rolling gamblers to Crown casinos. (See *China Story Yearbook 2016: Control*, Forum 'Crown Casion Arrests', pp.343–345).

In December, shareholders launched a class action suit against Crown because share prices dropped after the arrests.

13 July: Nobel Prize winning author and activist Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波 dies in custody. (See Forum 'Toppling Liu Xiaobo', pp.9–12 and Chapter 7, 'Prosper or Perish', pp.224–242.)

18 July: China notifies the World Trade Organisation that it will ban twenty-four types of scrap at the end of the year, influencing the ability of countries to export waste to China for recycling.

25 July: Chongqing chief Sun Zhengcai 孙政才 is announced to have been sacked and placed under investigation for corruption.

25 July: Sri Lankan cabinet approves a \$US1.12 billion agreement for a Chinese firm to manage a newly built port over a ninety-nine-year lease.

26 July: Taiwanese electronics giant Foxconn announces plans to build a display panel plant in Wisconsin that will be subsidised by the state government.

28 July: British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson confirms plans to sail two new aircraft carriers in the South China Sea as part of a freedom-of-navigation operation.

1 August: China opens its first overseas military base in Djibouti, on the north-western edge of the Indian Ocean. In a speech celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), Xi Jinping vows China will protect its sovereignty. In a military parade, the PLA introduces its new intercontinental ballistic missile, the DF-31AG.

8 August: Australia, Japan, and the US support a call by the Association of South-East Asian Nations for a South China Sea code of conduct to be legally binding.

16 August: US Treasury data reveals that China has again become the US's biggest creditor, with debts of \$US1.15 trillion.

28 August: China and India end the border standoff that began in early July. (See Forum 'Peripheral Trouble: The Sino-Indian Standoff', pp.99–103.)

1 September: Chinese textbooks are to be revised to state that the war against Japan began in 1931, when Japanese soldiers destroyed railways in Shenyang, instead of the established date of 1937, when Japanese soldiers attacked at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing.

3 September: North Korea tests its most powerful hydrogen bomb to date.

4 September: The ninth BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) summit is held, this time in Xiamen with the theme 'BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future'.

4 September: Chinese authorities announce a ban on the cryptocurrency fundraising method of initial coin offerings. Commentators express concern over ambiguity about the future of cryptocurrency in China.

13 September: The US blocks the sale of an American semiconductor company to Chinese bidders due to security concerns.

25 September: WhatsApp, a Facebook-owned messaging application, is blocked in China.

24 October: At the Nineteenth Communist Party of China National Congress, ‘Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era’ is added to the constitution, further centralising Xi’s authority. He used this forum to announce a ‘New Era’ 新时代, where he envisages reshaping global affairs to be more Sino-centric. (See Chapter 1, ‘The Nineteenth Party Congress: Here Comes the Future’, pp.14–26.)

31 October: China and South Korea agree to restore diplomatic relations to normal levels, after China’s protest over the US-supplied THAAD missile system led to large economic losses for Korean businesses.

1 November: K-Pop girl group Mamamoo performed on Chinese television — the first performance by South Korean artists since the economic boycott began.

8 November: Donald Trump visits China, meeting with Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, with the grand spectacle described by the hosts as ‘state visit-plus’.

11 November: Online shoppers spend US\$33 billion over twenty-four hours on the consumerism festival Singles Day 光棍节, breaking the previous record within thirteen hours.

16 November: US singer Katy Perry is denied a visa to perform at a Victoria’s Secret show in Shanghai, allegedly for wearing a sunflower dress in support of Taiwanese protestors at a show in Taipei in 2015. (See *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, Forum ‘Occupy Taiwan’, pp.137–145.)

19 November: Foreign Minister Wang Yi states China’s willingness to help Myanmar and Bangladesh solve the Rakhine State issue.

23 November: Claims of alleged sexual and physical abuse of children at a Beijing kindergarten generate widespread media coverage and public outrage.

29 November: In Beijing, forced evictions of up to 100,000 migrant workers — the so-called ‘low-end population’ 低端人口 — highlight complexities around development and internal migration in urban China.

12 December: Senator Sam Dastyari of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) quits the senate after his links with businessman Huang Xiangmo 黄向墨 are seen to have compromised his position. At a June 2016 press conference, while standing next to Huang, he contradicted the ALP position on the South China Sea, saying ‘The Chinese integrity of its borders is a matter for China’.

13 December: South Korea’s President Moon Jae-in visits China with 300 executives from South Korean companies in an attempt to boost business after the October thaw in diplomatic relations.

24 December: The world’s largest amphibious aircraft, the China-designed and made AVIC AG600, makes a one-hour maiden flight.

29 December: Donald Trump accuses China of breaching United Nations sanctions and selling oil to North Korea, a claim China denies.

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