

The (In)Auspicious Number Four: An Assessment of the Fourth Plenum of the Twentieth National Congress of the CCP

Jasper Roctus & Bart Dessen

Amid ongoing rivalry between various factions of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), severely depleted ranks caused by the ongoing anti-corruption crackdown, purges within the top ranks of the Chinese military, slowing economic growth, high youth unemployment, low consumer confidence, falling real-estate prices, and mounting local-government debt, the 20th Central Committee of the CCP convened its Fourth Plenary Session ('Fourth Plenum') in Beijing from October 20 to 23, 2025.

Attendance at the Fourth Plenum was notably low: 168 of 205 full members and 147 of 171 alternate members were present,¹ marking the lowest relative turnout at a CCP plenum since the official end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976.

During the Fourth Plenum, the 15th Five-Year Plan was deliberated and adopted, and subsequently set out in the *Recommendations of the Central Committee of the CCP for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development* (hereafter, 'Recommendations'). This plan will be submitted to the National People's Congress (NPC; China's 'parliament') for approval in March 2026. Whether these measures will meaningfully address China's economic and structural challenges amid an increasingly complex geopolitical environment remains to be seen.

Rallying around the Central Committee of the CCP with Comrade Xi Jinping at its Core

The adoption of the 'Recommendations' can be assessed

as the commencement of a fourth epoch of state-building and economic development of the People's Republic of China (PRC) since its foundation in 1949. The 1st to 7th Five-Year Plans (1953–1990) focused on the transition from an overall agricultural economy to an industrialized society—a development made possible to a large extent by improved contacts with the West since the mid-1970s. The 8th to 10th Five-Year Plans (1991–2005) were dominated by market-oriented reforms, symbolized in the concept 'Socialist Market Economy' (*shehui zhuyi shichang jingji*²) that was adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the CCP on November 14, 1993,³ and incorporated into the Constitution of the PRC (Article 15) in the same year.⁴ The apogee of this period was the PRC's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

Policies of the 11th to 14th Five-Year Plans (2006–2025) centered on innovation, high-quality development, and ecological development—the implementation of the so-called 'ecological civilization' (*shengtai wenming*⁵), a concept that entered the official lexicon during the Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao era (2002–2012) and was enshrined in the Preamble of the PRC's Constitution in 2018.⁶ The gradual evolution of the concept of 'ecological civilization' into 'Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization' (*Xi Jinping shengtai wenming sixiang*⁷) testifies to two underlying convictions: first, that *only* a top-down approach can realize the PRC's green turn; and second, that this turn is better understood as a form of 'green growth,' in which green technologies are instrumentalized to drive further economic development⁸.

Against the background of an international context that

is rife with geopolitical and geo-economic tensions, and different from the 14th Five-Year Plan that “covered a momentous and extraordinary period in China’s development” in which “the Central Committee of the CCP with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has united the entire Party and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and led them in meeting difficulties head-on and forging ahead with determination in a context of a complicated international landscape and the challenging domestic risks of advancing reform, promoting development, and ensuring stability,”⁹ the 15th Five-Year Plan focuses on the domestic market, domestic welfare, scientific and technological self-reliance, moving up the production ladder, and national security. This focus reinforces the commitments outlined at the Third Plenum of the 20th Central Committee of the CCP in 2024¹⁰.

To make sure that by 2035 “China’s economic strength, scientific and technological capabilities, national defense capabilities, composite national strength, and international influence will all be markedly stronger, that its per capita GDP will be on a par with that of a mid-level developed country, that its people will live better and happier lives, and that socialist modernization will be basically realized,”¹¹ the Central Committee formulated the following guiding philosophy (*zhidao sixiang*¹²): “Staying committed to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of ‘Three Represents,’ and the Scientific Outlook on Development, and fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.”¹³ This series purposefully includes the political concepts advanced by all paramount CCP leaders since the founding of the PRC—Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin (‘Three Represents’), Hu Jintao (‘Scientific Outlook on Development’), and Xi Jinping—and thus intends to teleologically reflect the Party’s long-term strategic trajectory.¹⁴ Reality, however, is far more contingent and pragmatic than the official CCP narrative suggests.

A Decapitated People’s Liberation Army as New Factions Form

Corroborating the leading position of the CCP—“following

the right approach in selecting and appointing officials, with political commitment as the primary criterion” (*jianchi zhengque yongren daoxiang, jianchi ba zhengzhi biao zhun fang zai shouwei*¹⁵)—the ‘Recommendations’ stress the necessity to “ensure that the Party exercises absolute leadership over the people’s armed forces, implement the system of ultimate responsibility resting with the chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) [...] advance ‘politics building the army’ [...] and run the military in accordance with the law.”¹⁶

The significance of this line has been underscored by a major purge of the military. Of the 33 generals serving on the Central Committee, 22 did not attend the session. The Fourth Plenum, following a Politburo decision, confirmed the CMC’s inspection report and approved the expulsion of several generals from the CCP on corruption charges.¹⁷ The circumstances surrounding other officers have yet to be disclosed.¹⁸ The political climate appeared especially ‘inauspicious’ for the People’s Liberation Army’s second-highest-ranking general, CMC Vice-Chairman and Politburo member He Weidong, as well as Admiral Miao Hua, another CMC member, both of whom were reportedly removed by the CCP. Having already expelled former defense minister Li Shangfu in 2024, the CMC is now down from seven officials to a mere four: Chairman Xi Jinping, Vice-Chairman Zhang Youxia, new Vice-Chairman Zhang Shengmin (promoted from ‘member’) and the CMC’s only remaining ‘member’ Liu Zhenli.

For some, the Fourth Plenum clearly ushered in ‘auspicious’ tides. As Zhang Shengmin maintains close ties with Zhang Youxia, both native to Shaanxi (as is Xi Jinping’s father—the term ‘Shaanxi Clique’ has entered the political narrative), Zhang Youxia, one of the few leaders in 2022 permitted to remain on the Politburo despite surpassing the informal retirement age of 68 (the others being Xi himself and Foreign Minister Wang Yi), appears to have further strengthened his influence over Xi’s “career allies” (such as those whom Xi worked with during his tenures in Zhejiang and Fujian, including He Weidong).



A Vacant Seat in the Politburo

The line-up of all paramount leaders (Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping) does not, however, preclude the possibility that Xi's ultimate triumph over the established factions of former leaders (Jiang Zemin's "Shanghai Clique" and Hu Jintao's "Youth League Faction") in 2022 has generated new factional divisions. This arguably parallels the period following Mao Zedong's consolidation of power at the onset of the Cultural Revolution, when reformist figures were sidelined and his loyalists engaged in intense internal struggles over the following decade, until Deng Xiaoping eventually brought his protégés—Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang—into the highest echelons of power.

While the exact intraparty dynamics remain opaque, unrest is likely to persist. Xi has yet to seize the clear opportunity presented by the Politburo seat vacated by He Weidong's downfall, which remains unfilled after the Fourth Plenum, to 'parachute' a new member with the credentials (age, background, and political stature) necessary to emerge as a potential successor at the next Party Congress in October 2027. As a result, the possibility—or arguably, necessity—of 'Xi IV' remains on the table, although far from a certainty if intraparty strife intensifies in 2026.

Stability and Self-Reliance as Economic Woes Continue

Despite its evident growing economic strengths, China faces a series of 'inauspicious' structural challenges that will shape its development over the next five years and beyond. Economically, sluggish domestic demand, lagging agricultural and rural modernization, regional economic inequality, slowing growth, high levels of local-government debt, rapid demographic ageing, and the necessity to ensure enhanced public wellbeing—all of which are clearly acknowledged in the 'Recommendations'—will continue to put pressure on the country's developmental model.

Moreover, geopolitical tensions with the West will continue to complicate Beijing's external environment.

It is against this background that we have to understand the call in the 'Recommendations' to develop 'new quality productive forces' (*xin zhi shengchanli*¹⁹) as one of the 'major objectives' (*zhuyao mubiao*²⁰) for the coming five years. This objective was also highlighted in the *Resolution of the Third Plenum of the Twentieth Party Congress* of July 2024.²¹ In a similar line, the 'Recommendations' also suggest to significantly boost scientific and technological self-reliance' (*keji zili ziqiang shuiping dafu tigao*²²) and further strengthen the national security shield (*guojia anquan pingzhang gengjia gonggu*²³). This inward-looking perspective is also evident from such 'major objectives' (*zhuyao mubiao*) as fostering greater confidence in Chinese culture (*wenhua zixin gengjia jianding*²⁴) among the domestic population, and continuing to improve the socialist market economy (*shehui zhuyi shichang jingji tizhi gengjia wanshan*²⁵). And this despite the fact that the 'Recommendations' also advocate advancing the 'Beautiful China Initiative' (*meili Zhongguo jianshe*²⁶), i.e., promoting eco-friendly practices with potential resonance abroad.

The road to reaching the objective, by 2035, of raising the average GDP per capita to 20,000 USD in nominal terms—which amounts to an increase of approximately 7,000 USD relative to 2024²⁷—is, however, littered with obstacles. The agricultural challenges that were labelled by then Premier Wen Jiabao as the 'three rural issues' (*san nong wenti*²⁸) in 2006, linger on. In line with the conclusions of the Third Plenum, the 'Recommendations' therefore call for a further relaxation of the household registration system (*hukou*²⁹). To boost domestic consumption, meanwhile, the 'Recommendations' argue it is necessary to restore consumer confidence following its all-time low in 2022.³⁰ With this aim in mind, (youth) employment (note that reliable statistics on youth unemployment are no longer provided³¹) has to be boosted; the duration of compulsory education should be extended, and all levels of education upgraded; incomes must rise; the share of fiscal expenditure devoted to public services and welfare should be increased; and incentives to encourage higher birth rates should be refined.

Technologically, however, China continues to depend on



foreign high-end inputs, particularly in semiconductors and advanced machinery, while the risk of global tech fragmentation remains high due to US-China rivalry. Seeking to attract greater foreign investment in high-end sectors—in line with the 2024 Third Plenum —Beijing pledges to safeguard the multilateral trading system, align with high-standard international economic and trade rules, and expand market access, particularly in the service sector and in areas such as technological innovation, trade in services, and industrial development. This necessity also underpins China's continued investments in developing a digital Renminbi (RMB), advancing RMB internationalization, establishing a cross-border RMB payment system, and reinforcing Shanghai's position as an international financial center.

To address regional disparities, the 'Recommendations' propose concrete measures for the large-scale development of the western region, the revitalization of the Northeast that has declined since the 1980s, the rise of the central region, and the accelerated modernization of the eastern region.

Environmentally, China remains heavily dependent on coal even as it invests substantially in renewables, while climate vulnerabilities such as water scarcity and extreme weather pose additional risks. The development of an 'ecological civilization' is intended to mitigate these challenges.

All in all, it is hardly surprising that the 15th Five-Year Plan's 61 'Recommendations,' while addressing many of these concerns—"security" appears 57 times, "consumption" and "reform" 23 times each, and "Chinese-style modernization" 21 times—place an even greater emphasis on economic stability and technological self-reliance. Building on the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) formulated during China's zero-COVID period, its successor prioritizes technological autonomy—particularly in AI, advanced manufacturing, and strategic industries—reflecting the intensifying global tech competition, which is perceived to carry potentially 'inauspicious' implications.

Self-inflicted Geopolitical Hardship

Relatively understated in the 15th Five-Year plan is that beyond economic and technological concerns, China also faces a challenging—and if not approached with agility possibly 'inauspicious'—geopolitical environment. The nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has retained the presidency in Taiwan,³² tensions with Japan continue to intensify over new far-right prime minister Sanae Takaichi's public suggestion that Tokyo intervene militarily if China attacked Taiwan, and a growing number of incidents in the South China Sea have further strained relations with its neighbors—especially the Philippines. Still, a few silver linings exist for Beijing: the election of a unification-oriented chairwoman to lead Taiwan's opposition Kuomintang (KMT) offers prospects ahead of the 2028 Taiwanese general election; the victory of the relatively China-friendly Lee Jae-myung in South Korea has created limited room for diplomatic recalibration after years of bilateral fallout; and border tensions with India have somewhat stabilized, even though the core disputes remain unresolved.

Still, Beijing keeps struggling to fully capitalize on diplomatic openings. In its relations with New Delhi, the arbitrary detention of an Indian citizen from the contested northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh (claimed by China as "Southern Tibet") during a stopover in Shanghai appears highly counterproductive to the recent fragile normalization of bilateral ties.³³ With regard to Japan, one may similarly question whether the sharp countermeasures (including travel warnings, import restrictions, and even threats to behead Takaichi by the Chinese consul-general in Osaka) were truly necessary or strategically wise.³⁴ After all, Takaichi did not declare Taiwan to be independent from China—which would have been an understandable red line from Beijing's perspective—but 'merely' argued that a unilateral military invasion would be interpreted as an existential threat to Japan's own security interests. Whether such measures will prompt strategic restraint in Tokyo, or instead further entrench a more hawkish Japanese position on Taiwan, remains to be seen.



More broadly, these incidents highlight the importance of distinguishing between top-down, centrally coordinated actions (such as the official travel advisories and trade restrictions) and bottom-up, actor-driven behavior (such as the individual detentions and provocative statements by overeager officials) in the PRC. When the latter are not effectively controlled, which has grown more common over the last several decades—recall the Sino-Japanese spat of 2012—they risk becoming a popular “boomerang” that undermines Beijing’s stated pursuit of harmony and stability in foreign-policy. Indeed, the nationalism that the CCP has ardently cultivated since the 1990s has become a Pandora’s box that is difficult to close.

So, What Can Europe Do?

Politically, the European Union (EU) should nevertheless continue to urge Beijing to adopt a more constructive and less assertive posture on regional security issues—notably in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and in its dealings with neighboring countries—in order to restore confidence in Brussels and across European capitals. Although differences in political systems will persist, and the ‘systemic rival’ framing is thus likely to remain, it is essential to impress upon Beijing that restraint in rhetoric and military posturing, coupled with a recommitment to multilateral diplomacy, would contribute significantly to stabilizing the broader relationship. No matter how much Beijing might desire otherwise, political and economic relations cannot be neatly separated. The “business above all” era of the 1990s and 2000s has long ended.

Nevertheless, if a minimum level of political stability and trust can be reestablished, significant economic opportunities would remain. The 15th Five-Year Plan acknowledges the necessity to further expand the middle income class, foster MSEs, boost domestic consumption, and enhance welfare. These objectives all require continuing engagement by China with the outside world, thereby providing Brussels with an opportunity to exercise considerable leverage. However, the advocacy in the ‘Recommendations’ to pursue self-reliance and, in the upcoming five years, to “continue with the project to pass on and develop fine traditional Chinese culture, [...and]

develop a system of defining symbols of Chinese culture,”³⁵ risks to obscure China’s pledge to pursue more openness.

Confronted with this contradictory message, the EU should continue to engage with China. At present, around 3,000 Chinese companies operate in the EU, providing employment for approximately 260,000³⁶ Europeans. Moreover, the PRC still relies on high-end inputs from the West across many sectors. In areas where China threatens to surpass Europe (and the US), such as the pharmaceutical sector, halting engagement would deprive European companies of essential competition needed to foster home-grown innovation.

To counter China’s top-down innovation system, the EU could leverage its private sector and academic institutions through Europe-wide research programs, supported financially by initiatives such as the Global Gateway. In this context, the EU’s emphasis on privacy and security provides a normative advantage vis-à-vis third countries in its competition with China. In short, the Fourth Plenum need not be ‘inauspicious’ for the EU; its foremost task now is to capitalize on its unique strengths to remain a key player in a global environment defined by the rat race for technological supremacy.

Dr. Jasper Roctus is a Senior Associate Fellow at the Egmont Institute, where he focuses on domestic Chinese politics and cross-Strait relations, occasionally branching into Vietnamese politics. In September 2025, he earned his PhD in Sinology from Ghent University within the “East Asian Culture in Perspective: Identity, Historical Consciousness, Modernity” research group, examining evolving narratives surrounding Sun Yat-sen.

Prof. Dr. Bart Dessein lectures on modern and contemporary China at Ghent University, where he is head of the research group “East Asian Culture in Perspective: Identity, Historical Consciousness, Modernity.” He currently is Francqui Foundation Research Professor Chairholder. He is also a Senior Associate Fellow at Egmont. Bart Dessein is the President (2025) of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences.



Endnotes

- 1 “Communique of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs. People’s Republic of China* (October 23, 2025). Available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202510/t20251023_11739505.html (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 2 社会主义市场经济.
- 3 Communist Party of China, ‘Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Issues Concerning the Establishment of the Socialist Market Economy’, Part 2, 1993.
- 4 中华人民共和国宪法 (Constitution of the People’s Republic of China). (Last accessed December 3, 2025). https://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm
- 5 生态文明.
- 6 中华人民共和国宪法 (Constitution of the People’s Republic of China). Available at https://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/22/content_5276318.htm (Last accessed December 3, 2025).
- 7 习近平生态文明思想.
- 8 For a more detailed analysis: see Beatrice Gallelli, “Why ‘Ecological civilisation’? The values driving China’s green turn under Xi Jinping.” *ReConnect China Policy Brief # 29*, December 2025.
- 9 “十四五”时期我国发展历程极不寻常、极不平凡。面对错综复杂的国际形势和艰巨繁重的国内改革发展稳定任务，以习近平同志为核心的党中央团结带领全党全国各族人民，迎难而上、砥砺前行。” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” (Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan
- 10 See Bart Dessein and Jasper Roctus, “The Third Plenum of the Twentieth Party Congress: ideological fervor, economic pragmatism, and the accessed December 3, 2025)
- 11 “实现我国经济实力、科技实力、国防实力、综合国力和国际影响力大幅跃升，人均国内生产总值达到中等发达国家水平人民生活更加幸福美好，基本实现社会主义现代化。” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” (Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu* (October 28, 2025). Available at https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202510/content_7046050.htm (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 12 指导思想.
- 13 “坚持马克思列宁主义、毛泽东思想、邓小平理论、“三个代表”重要思想、科学发展观，全面贯彻习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想。” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” (Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu* (October 28, 2025). Available at https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202510/content_7046050.htm (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 14 Note that this series is complemented with a series of six ‘principles that must be followed’ (*bixu zunxun de yuanze* 必须遵循的原则) among which are ‘upholding the Party’s overall leadership’ (*jianchi dang de quanmian lingdao* 坚持党的全面领导), a concept that is reminiscent of Deng Xiaoping’s ‘Four Cardinal Principles’ (*Si xiang jiben yuanze* 四项基本原则: upholding socialism; upholding the dictatorship of the proletariat; upholding the leading role of the CCP; upholding Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Zedong) and ‘putting the people first’ (*jianchi renmin zhi shang* 坚持人民至上), a concept that is reminiscent of Hu Jintao’s ‘people-orientation’ (*yi ren wei ben* 以人为本). The latter concept returns in the 15th Five-Year Plan’s focus on enhancing welfare.
- 15 坚持正确用人导向，坚持把政治标准放在首位.
- 16 “坚持党对人民军队绝对领导，贯彻军委主席负责制，[...] 推进政治建军 [...] 依法治军。” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议。” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” (Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu* (October 28, 2025). Available at https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202510/content_7046050.htm (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 17 “Communique of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs. People’s Republic of China* (October 23, 2025). Available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202510/t20251023_11739505.html (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 18 “Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party: major purges in the military and within the party,” *Centre for Eastern Studies* (October 28, 2025). Available at <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2025-10-28/fourth-plenum-central-committee-20th-national-congress-chinese> (Last accessed November 29, 2025).
- 19 新质生产力.
- 20 主要目标.
- 21 See Bart Dessein and Jasper Roctus, “The Third Plenum of the Twentieth Party Congress: ideological fervor, economic pragmatism, and the possibilities for EU-China relations,” in Bart Dessein and Jasper Roctus, eds. *Asia Europe Journal. Special Issue: EU-China Relations after the 2024 European Elections: A European Viewpoint*, 2025. Available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10308-025-00744-1> (Last accessed December 3, 2025). Also see “Understanding New Quality Productive Forces and Accelerating Their Development.” *Qishi* March-April 2024. Available at http://en.qstheory.cn/2024-05/11/c_985265.htm (Last accessed December 3, 2025)
- 22 科技自立自强水平大幅提高.
- 23 国家安全屏障更加巩固.
- 24 文化自信更加坚定.
- 25 社会主义市场经济体制更加完善.
- 26 美丽中国建设.

- 27 Personal communication B.D.
- 28 三农问题. The ‘three rural issues’ are the problem of agricultural industrialization, the urban-rural dichotomy caused by the household registration system, and the low income of farmers as compared to urban incomes.
- 29 户口.
- 30 Consumer Confidence in China stood at 89.60 points in September 2025. This is a significant increase from the record low of 85.10 points in November 2022, but still far away from the average 108.82 points for the period 1990–2025. Figures: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Available at <https://tradingeconomics.com/china/consumer-confidence> (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 31 After youth unemployment had risen to a record high of over 21%, reportedly reaching around 40% in rural areas and as much as 50% when accounting for part-time or underemployment in June 2023, the Chinese authorities responded by suspending the release of reliable age-specific unemployment data. See Nicole Goldin, “Youth unemployment in China: New metric, same mess,” *Atlantic Council* (February 16, 2024). Available at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/youth-unemployment-in-china-new-metric-same-mess/> (Last accessed December 3, 2025). Also see Josh Zumbrun, “How China Made a Youth Unemployment Crisis Disappear. When autocratic governments cancel unflattering statistics, the problem becomes the purview of anecdotes and guesswork,” *The Wall Street Journal* (December 8, 2023). Available at <https://www.wsj.com/world/china/how-china-made-a-youth-unemployment-crisis-disappear-32afa255> (Last accessed December 3, 2025).
- 32 It should here be recalled that Taiwan was a Japanese colony between 1895 and 1945. Notably, the “Taiwan issue” receives only cursory treatment in point 59 of the ‘Recommendations.’
- 33 See Sudha Ramachandran, “India-China Engage in War of Words Over Arunachal Pradesh,” *The Diplomat* (December 3, 2025). Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2025/12/india-china-engage-in-war-of-words-over-arunachal-pradesh/> (Last accessed December 5, 2025).
- 34 See Koh Ewe, “What to know about China and Japan’s escalating spat over Taiwan,” *BBC News* (November 18, 2025). Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crklvx2n7rzo> (Last accessed December 3, 2025).
- 35 “深入实施中华优秀传统文化传承发展工程 [...], 构建中华文明标识体系” See “中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十五个五年规划的建议” (Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu* (October 28, 2025). Available at https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202510/content_7046050.htm (Last accessed November 30, 2025).
- 36 Personal communication B.D.





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