

# 19<sup>th</sup> CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS | International perspective

## Certainty stems from leadership

London-based scholar lauds China for creating global opportunities with projects like the Belt and Road Initiative

By **CECILY LIU** in London  
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China is playing an increasingly important leadership role, creating certainty at a time when Western countries are faced with unpredictability, according to Kerry Brown, director of the Lau China Institute at King's College London in the United Kingdom.

He said this leadership role is reflected in international programs like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), both of which are examples of "unique new ways China is now giving to the world."

The Belt and Road aims to boost trade and investment across the ancient Silk Road routes, while the AIIB provides financial support.

The 19th National Congress is where that leadership role and China's priorities will be discussed

and refined. Brown said he would be interested to learn more about the policy directions that will be set by the congress, as they will play a key role in determining the path of China's growth.

Brown, a respected professor of Chinese studies who has held many important posts, including head of the Asia program at the Chatham House think tank and director of the Europe China Research and Advice Network, has witnessed China's growth over the past few decades.

He described China as "dynamic, complex and aspirational", but also pointed out that the country still needs to resolve issues, such as equality and efficiency, to move forward.

Brown said the country's development over the next five years is crucial for China and the world because the size of the Chinese economy means it has ramifica-



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**KERRY BROWN**

Director of the Lau China Institute at King's College London.

tions internationally. "China has a new role. Domestic issues are global because of their size and scale," he said.

If development progresses smoothly, he expects China's middle class to grow and the service sector to play a greater role in the economy, while pension and healthcare provisions improve.

Meanwhile, China's international engagement will benefit the world, particularly as it shares its development experience with other economies.

One example is its leadership role in infrastructure investment along the Belt and Road, utilizing its extensive domestic experience.

"Over the past 40 years, China has been developing, and dealing with poverty," Brown said. "No country in the past 50 years has built more infrastructure. The Belt and Road is creating opportunities in the region."

Meanwhile, the modernization of China's economy is prompting the country to change its mode of global engagement from a low-profile approach to a new model that is characterized by equality and better-quality relations.

"To achieve its development ambitions and become a modernized economy, and have a modernized service sector, China needs to upgrade relations with the world with regard to intellectual partnerships, technology transfers and research collaboration."

Within this new landscape, it is also important for the world to understand China, Brown said.

"I think we are learning with each other in a deeper way that will continue. China is now contributing more, and becoming more equal. The outside world needs to understand the complexity and richness of China's cultural and intellectual traditions."

Q&A | **BERNARD DEWIT**

## Bold moves define global ties

President Xi's mature leadership in both words and actions continues to positively reshape geopolitics

Since the early 1980s, when former leader Deng Xiaoping brought "revolutionary changes", Bernard Dewit, chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, has been working to deepen economic links between China and his country.

Dewit said the changes President Xi Jinping and the Communist Party of China (CPC) have rolled out in the past five years are also revolutionary, and that the ongoing changes are reshaping international politics in a positive way.

**What are your views of the CPC since Xi became its leader in 2012?**

The present leadership is mature. In the 1980s, China's leadership — with Deng Xiaoping as architect — brought revolutionary changes thanks to the reform and opening-up policies.

A new revolution has taken place in China since Xi Jinping was elected. China has made great steps in economic restructuring, environ-

mental protection, fighting corruption, opening up its economy and proactive engagement with international politics.

Xi faces challenges, but he is not afraid. It is revolutionary both in terms of words and actions.

**What has impressed you most about Xi's leadership?**

Xi has been courageous in tackling problems brought by impressive growth in previous decades. He is determined to cope with environmental woes, administrative inefficiency and corruption.

I think what Xi and his team are doing to cope with these issues comprehensively is brave. Many leaders in Europe don't dare to take radical measures. They postpone such decisions.

For Xi, the task was huge and challenging, and he deserves admiration because he went ahead, and did so in a smooth way. This reinforced the credibility of the Party, and I hope that he can continue and go further.



**Bernard Dewit,**  
chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

**What has Xi achieved internationally?**

When you look at China's role in international politics, it's growing in importance. This makes sense

because China has a big population and a strong economy.

This means more international influence and power. China is taking action instead of merely making declarations like some countries. In terms of international politics and economics, the Belt and Road Initiative is impressive.

**What was your impression of Xi when you met him in 2014?**

I was struck by his confidence, and the fact he has vision and knows where he's going. It's encouraging that Xi visited the European Union headquarters in early 2014. But the question is, what should be the priority in boosting Beijing-Brussels relations in the coming years?

We should go ahead with an investment and free trade treaty as soon as possible, though there are different voices within the EU.

**What do you think of Xi's approach to dealing with global powers?**

Xi has never told European nations what to do. Xi and the Chinese leadership have always discussed issues with European countries.

Xi said in a speech that we need to join forces, we need to have a common aim. He has not said we have this project in China, do that here in Europe. That is appreciated in Europe.

**Do you think Brussels will treat Washington and Beijing equally in two or three years?**

It will not happen quickly, but I think our strong links with the United States could weaken. I don't think they will be the same as those with China, as there's a long history with the US. But we are not so sure of the political future of Brussels-Washington relations.

Europe has more in common with China than with the US. The US is relatively new. China and Europe are much older in terms of culture. We have that in common. We should play on that.