COMMENT

Editorials

The two sessions reflect the strength of whole-process people's democracy

The two sessions stand as a cornerstone of China's political calendar. The meetings of the National People's Congress, China's highest legislative body, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body, far from being ceremonial are a dynamic platform for the setting of national priorities, addressing key issues, and showcasing China's political system and governance.

The sessions are a key occasion for deputies to the NPC and members of the CPPCC National Committee to review and air their views on what the country has achieved in the past year, as well as put forward proposals or motions on economic development, social policies, legislative changes, and national strategies. These proposals are not abstract ideas but are rooted in the realities of Chinese society, reflecting the voices and concerns of people from all walks of life.

As a country ruled by the Communist Party of China with the support of multiple non-Communist political parties, the NPC and the CPPCC play a pivotal role in the country's whole-process people's democracy, which emphasizes democratic principles and practices throughout all stages of governance, decision-making, and public participation. Unlike traditional models of democracy that focus primarily on periodic elections as the main mechanism for citizen participation, China's whole-process people's democracy seeks to embed democratic values in every aspect of governance, from policy formulation to implementation and evaluation.

The deputies to the NPC and members of the CPPCC National Committee play important roles in this distinctive political advancement that guarantees people have extensive rights to be informed, to participate, to express and to supervise. They are entrusted with the duty of delving deep into what ordinary people think of a particular policy the central authorities have implemented and shoulder the responsibility of collecting public opinions about how a local government has implemented the policies of the central government. To this end, the CPPCC organizes various types of fact-finding missions, during which members will visit particular enterprises or local regions or even a particular project to find out how things are going and what problems need to be addressed.

Deputies to the NPC are representatives of various sectors of Chinese society. That migrant workers were elected as deputies to the NPC in 2018 speaks volumes about what the NPC has done to make the congress a platform in which all strata of society can voice their concerns.

The strength of this participatory, responsive and inclusive form of governance finds expression in the resilience of the Chinese economy, the growth of which stood at 5 percent in 2024 despite the sluggishness of global economic development, as well as the uncertainties of the international situation.

The proposals and motions from both the NPC deputies and members of the CPPCC National Committee provide the CPC Central Committee with enough reference to target and fine tune the decisions they make. The centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee make it possible for decisions to be made as soon as possible without hesitance or any foot-dragging owing to the lack of consensus.

Both the supervision within the Party and oversight by the NPC and the CPPCC National Committee provide a guarantee for targeted economic policies that can make a difference to the growth of the economy.

The trade-in policy is a typical example. It is designed to stimulate domestic consumption. During the Spring Festival period in early February, the sales revenue of motor vehicles, home appliances, and digital products such as mobile phones reached 31 billion yuan ($4.26 billion) within eight days, thanks to the trade-in policy.

China's total GDP surpassed 134 trillion yuan in 2024, which would not have been achieved without the timely adjustment of policies, which is an inherent strength of the country's political system.

In a world grappling with uncertainty, China's whole-process people's democracy offers a compelling example of how participatory, responsive, and inclusive governance can deliver stability and growth. The two sessions are a vivid demonstration of this system in action, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and that their aspirations are translated into reality.

'Snuffing out candles' makes it darker for all

Beijing rolled out countermeasures on Tuesday in response to the additional 10 percent tariff the United States arbitrarily imposed on Chinese goods that day.

Apart from putting some US companies on its unreliable entity list, citing national sovereignty, security and development concerns, Beijing has taken aim at a variety of US agricultural produce this time. Its previous retaliatory tariffs were mainly restricted to certain US industrial products. Starting from Monday next week, China will impose an additional 15 percent tariff on chicken, wheat, corn and cotton originating from the US; and another 10 percent tariff on US sorghum, soybeans, pork, beef, aquatic products, fruits, vegetables and dairy products. It has also launched an anti-circumvention investigation into imported fiber optic products originating from the US.

China is also suing the US for its latest tariff increase under the World Trade Organization dispute settlement mechanism, as the unilateral tariff measures are not only unjust but seriously violate WTO rules and undermine the basis for bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

Although agricultural produce is only one of the major US exports to China, the number of jobs it supports in the US is even more than those supported by its industrial and energy exports to China combined.

China is the largest market for US agricultural exports, accounting for about 20 percent of the total, followed by Mexico and Canada. In contrast, thanks to its diversification strategy in recent years, China has promoted robust agricultural trade relations with other major agricultural exporters including Brazil, the European Union, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Russia and Ukraine. The US now accounts for about 15 percent of China's agricultural imports.

The Trump administration should be spurred by Beijing's latest move to reflect on the fact that what it has done with regard to China-related economic and trade issues over the past month or so has already prompted the Chinese side to doubt its good faith in saying Sino-US relations stand at a new beginning.

The US administration has claimed that the double tariff hike is because China has not taken adequate steps to alleviate the illicit drug crisis through cooperative enforcement actions.

But as the US itself has acknowledged, China has demonstrated a strong commitment to joint counternarcotics efforts, in policy formulation and implementation, and the collaboration between China and the US in combating narcotics has produced significant results. That is also detailed in a white paper on the issue Beijing released on Tuesday. The recent decision by the US to impose tariffs on Chinese exports under the pretext of the fentanyl issue represents a step backward, undermining the spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit that has characterized the bilateral counternarcotics efforts.

By targeting US agricultural imports, Beijing intends to awaken the Trump administration to the historically proven truth there are no winners in trade wars. The countermeasures both Canada and Mexico have taken in response to the US' tariff attacks on them are also expected to serve to drive home that message to the administration.

The US' coercive and bullying moves should also prompt the two countries to realize that snuffing out others' candles does not bring light to oneself, as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said. The two countries have previously proposed to the Trump administration that they should target China together with the US in exchange for the US administration showing them tariff lenience.

"The Chinese people never accept bullying. Pressure, coercion and threats are not the right way to deal with China", said Lin. "Exerting extreme pressure on China is the wrong target and the wrong calculation."

"If the US really wants to resolve the fentanyl issue, it should consult with China on the basis of equality, respect and mutual benefit to resolve each other's concerns. If the US has other intentions and insists on launching a tariff war, trade war or any other war, China will fight to the end," Lin added.

As before, Beijing announced its retaliatory tariffs about one week before they are due to take effect, leaving a window of opportunity for the two sides to take advantage of multiple dialogue and exchange channels to reach an agreement. The US should view and handle issues in an objective and rational manner and return to the right track of properly resolving differences through equal dialogue as soon as possible, as China's Commerce Ministry has urged.

Weaponizing tariffs or bending rules is not dealmaking, it is extortion and blackmail. Such practices epitomize the bullying that characterizes "America First".

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Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Improving business environment for private enterprises imperative

The authorities in Henan, Liaoning and Anhui provinces and some other places recently held meetings with representatives of private businesses to analyze the situation of the private economy and address the companies' major concerns.

The People's Bank of China and multiple State departments have also met to coordinate measures to improve the financial support mechanisms for the high-quality development of private enterprises, and solve their financing problems.

The focus of the authorities is on creating a better development environment for private companies by helping them resolve their practical difficulties — such as arrears on payments, arbitrary fees and fines, difficult and expensive financing, and barriers to market access — apart from protecting the legitimate rights and interests of private enterprises and entrepreneurs in accordance with the law.

Over the years, the central government has repeatedly issued mandates to provide a more legalized and market-oriented business environment for private enterprises, but implementation of policies varies from region to region and department to department. It is necessary that the policies that are adopted are implemented to the letter in a coordinated way.

China is in the process of transitioning from extensive growth to high-quality development, with economic operation facing the pressure of structural and cyclical adjustment while being affected by the external environment. In the transition to a more market-oriented and law-based governance system, the new institutional framework has not been on a solid footing.

At the same time, some enterprises still rely on traditional scale expansion for profits, while lacking innovation ability. As a result they are faced with problems such as insufficient market demand and intensifying competition, which bring the dual pressure of survival and expectations. Policymakers need to address these issues in a targeted way.

For the downward economic pressure caused by cyclical and structural factors, the country needs to expand domestic demand with more proactive and moderately loose monetary policies.

As for the market environment, the authorities should not only strengthen law enforcement and supervision, but also form a unified national market as soon as possible in which private enterprises can use production factors equally, participate in market competition fairly, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of private enterprises and entrepreneurs effectively.

Private enterprises should also realize that the internal power of development is their top priority, the pressures from the external environment are temporary, and for survival and greater development, they should build and enhance their core competitiveness.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

A benign competition measured in qubits

Zuchongzhi 3.0, or the latest superconducting quantum computer model developed by Chinese scientists, has set a new benchmark for quantum computational advantage.

In 2012, John Preskill, a theoretical physicist at California Institute of Technology, coined the concept of quantum computational advantage, or quantum supremacy, to describe the point where a quantum computer can perform a task that a classical computer cannot realistically accomplish within a reasonable time frame.

Quantum computing's advent marks a paradigm shift from conventional computing in that quantum computers deploy quantum bits (qubits) to store quantum information in values between 0 and 1 while conventional computers process information in the form of digital bits (0s and 1s).

This means the values that quantum computers can make use of far exceed conventional ones. That's why a key index of a quantum computer is the number of qubits it uses — in 2019, Google was the first to claim quantum supremacy with a 53-qubit Sycamore processor completing in 200 seconds a random circuit sampling task, which the fastest supercomputer at the time would have taken approximately 10,000 years to simulate.

To unify standards, a consensus emerged to use the optimal classical algorithm as the benchmark, following which the world's first strictly proven quantum computational supremacy was achieved in 2020 by a research team from the University of Science and Technology of China on the Jiuzhang photonic quantum computing prototype, while the first strictly proven quantum computational supremacy in a superconducting system was achieved by the same team using the Zuchongzhi 2.0 in 2021.

In October 2024, Google's Sycamore, which had a 67-qubit superconducting quantum processor, achieved quantum supremacy surpassing classical supercomputers by nine orders of magnitude, or becoming billion times faster. That tells you how big a step forward Zuchongzhi 3.0 marks with 105 qubits. To quote an academic essay of the team, "Our experiments with an 83-qubit, 32-cycle random circuit sampling on Zuchongzhi 3.0 highlight its superior performance, achieving 1 million samples in just a few hundred seconds."

Many global observers have said that the 105-qubit processor is a competitor to Google's Sycamore. However, such competition is benign because it will benefit whole mankind. China holds an open attitude toward such competition and looks forward to research teams from the United States and elsewhere making greater breakthroughs.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Power play promises to upend old certainties

Commenting on US President Donald Trump's "America First" dealmaking-oriented policies and practices, The Economist said that "Donald Trump has begun a mafia-like struggle for global power".

The dramatic meeting between Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart in the White House on Friday, one day after the United Kingdom magazine predicted in that piece that Trump is putting an end to the post-1945 order, has prompted many in the West to realize that is a real challenge for the world to resolve, not only Ukraine.

That meeting offered a vivid demonstration that what the Trump team cared most about was the US people thinking it was doing a good job to protect US interests and dignity.

But many think just the opposite. After the awkward meeting, a new NPR/PBS News/Marist poll found that a majority of respondents believe the state of the union is not strong, that the country is headed in the wrong direction and President Trump is rushing to make changes without considering their impact.

Although it is too early to say the transatlantic alliance has collapsed, by hyping up the possibility of the United Sates withdrawing from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at this juncture, the Trump administration is apparently trying to heighten the pressure on Europe in a bid to further widen the divide between European countries.

The joint statement released after the London summit on Sunday clearly indicates Europe is still looking to the US to not only support Ukraine in its fight with Russia but also protect its own security. Something Trump quickly jumped on. "Europe, in the meeting they had with Zelensky, stated flatly that they cannot do the job without the US. Probably not a great statement to have been made in terms of a show of strength against Russia. What are they thinking?" he posted on his social media account.

After the Oval Office showdown, the resolution of the Ukraine crisis and the formation of the European security mechanism are still up in the air. But as with its "art of a deal" on other fronts, namely the Middle East crisis and the US' economic and trade relations with other major parties, the Trump administration is doubling down on its efforts to push the situation in Europe to develop in the direction it desires.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY