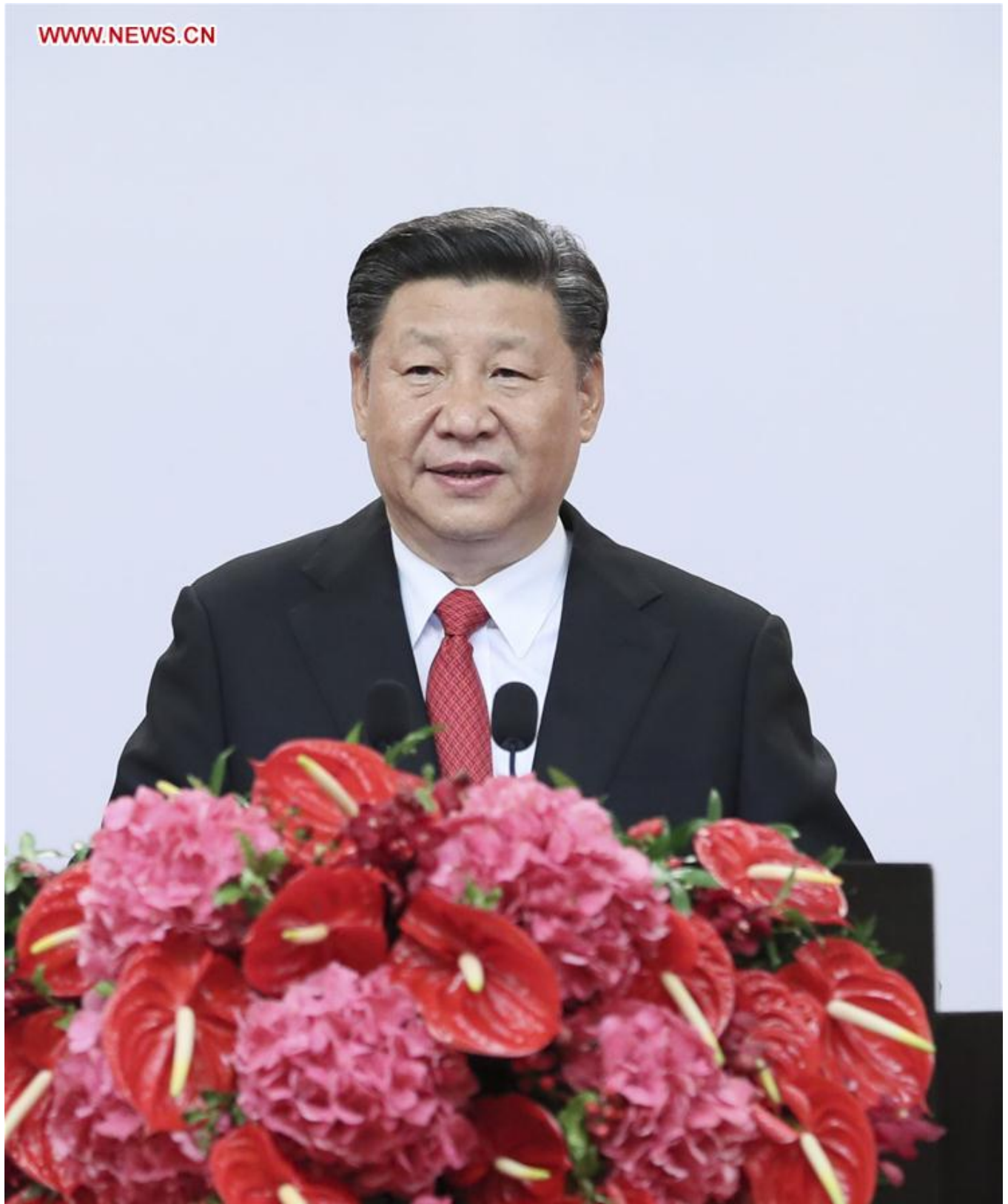


Xi pledges firm commitment to 'one country, two systems'



Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks at a welcome dinner hosted by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in Hong Kong, south China, June 30, 2017. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)

President Xi Jinping reiterated the central government's firm commitment to "one country, two systems" on multiple occasions Friday, a day before the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China.

"The road ahead may not be smooth, but our commitment to 'one country, two systems' remains unchanged, and our resolve remains firm and strong," said Xi when addressing a welcome dinner hosted by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The president compared the practice of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong over the past two decades to the growth of a seedling, which has become strong and robust despite wind and rain and yielded many fruits.

Hailing "one country, two systems" a great pioneering initiative by China, Xi said its practice, featuring socialism in the main body of the country and capitalism in certain regions, is unprecedented in human political history. "It is a breakthrough those before us made through exploration and with extraordinary courage. We the succeeding generation should practice and develop 'one country, two systems' with firm resolve," Xi said.

"We should have full confidence in ourselves, in Hong Kong and in our country," the president said, calling for persistent and unrelenting efforts to achieve even greater success in the practice of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong.

Riding in an open-top camouflage jeep, Xi, also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission, inspected the Chinese People's Liberation Army Garrison in the HKSAR at Shek Kong barracks Friday.

Xi told the troops to firm up the responsibility for and commitment to safeguarding "one country, two systems."

"The garrison is an important embodiment of national sovereignty, an important force to safeguard 'one country, two systems,' and an important cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," Xi said.

He urged the garrison to make efforts to enhance "combat readiness" so as to fulfill its role as a powerful stabilizing force.

The president's tight schedule Friday also included whirlwind meetings with local dignitaries, the HKSAR's first chief executive Tung Chee-hwa, the Macao Special Administrative Region's chief executive Chui Sai On, and central government officials based in Hong Kong and executives of Hong Kong branches of mainland enterprises and institutions.

During the meeting with a group of dignitaries from all walks of life of Hong Kong, Xi said the central government stands firm on the "one country, two systems" principle.

For Hong Kong, the focus is not whether the principle will change or not, but how to implement it comprehensively and accurately, Xi stressed.

Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland two decades ago, the successful practice of the "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong has won global recognition, Xi said.

New situations and new problems emerging in practice should be treated in a correct and reasonable manner, Xi said, adding ways must be found to solve the problems.

When difficulties are overcome and problems solved, progress is made in the practice of "one country, two systems," he said.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGE

Addressing the dinner held in honor of him Friday, the president called on Hong Kong to leverage its institutional advantage of "one country, two systems" to create new growth drivers and new space for development.

The practice of "one country, two systems" has given Hong Kong an "institutional advantage," enabling it both to share in the mainland's vast market and development opportunities and often serve as a testing ground for the country's new opening-up initiatives, Xi said.

By building on and leveraging its strengths, Hong Kong will surely be able to seize opportunities presented by economic globalization and regional cooperation to promote innovative local business start-ups, and develop new growth drivers, he said.

"The motherland has given and will always give a strong backing to Hong Kong," the president said.

Hong Kong has leveraged the combined advantages of "one country" and "two systems," continuously expanded its functions, and has played the role of "super-connector" between the mainland and the world in the past 20 years, said outgoing HKSAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in his welcoming remarks at the banquet.

The continuous development of the country will give new and huge impetus to Hong Kong's social and economic development, and provide the young generation with a more diverse, larger and more colorful stage of life, he noted.

Enjoying a light moment on the eve of the return anniversary, the president attended a grand gala marking the event at the waterfront Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center Friday night.

The show culminated when Xi stepped onto the stage and sang in chorus the song "Ode to the Motherland" with the performers and the audience.

Xi arrived here Thursday to attend celebrations for Hong Kong's 20th return anniversary and the inauguration of the HKSAR's fifth-term government. Inspection of the HKSAR is also on the schedule for his three-day stay.

[It is right that the Kensington and Chelsea Leader has resigned after his handling of the Grenfell fire – Gwynne](#)

Labour's

Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Andrew Gwynne MP,

commenting on Nick Paget-Brown stepping down as Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council, said:

“It is right that the Kensington and Chelsea Leader has resigned after his handling of the Grenfell fire.

“It is clear that that the community has lost trust in their council, and Sajid Javid needs to finally show some leadership and make sure all residents are getting the support they need.

“The lack of management of this tragedy, from both local and central government, has been a disgrace – and Javid needs to call an immediate review into the council's corporate governance with a view to sending in commissioners to take control of the council.”

[China hosts 15th East Asia Forum](#)

The 15th East Asia Forum was held Friday in central China's Hunan Province, discussing the construction of East Asia economic community among other major agendas.

The forum focused on reviewing 20 years of APT (ASEAN Plus Three) cooperation, motivating small and medium-sized enterprises in regional integration and formulating a blueprint for the East Asia economic community.

Nearly 100 officials, entrepreneurs and scholars from ASEAN countries plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (10+3), as well as representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, attended the event in Changsha, provincial

capital of Hunan.

The 10+3 cooperation model has become a prominent feature of East Asia and has boosted common, sustainable development and connectivity in infrastructure, trade and finance and people-to-people exchange, said Liu Zhenmin, vice foreign minister of China.

Under the new circumstances, all sides should strengthen coordination and deepen practical cooperation to push the 10+3 cooperation to new levels, he said.

China proposed to use the forum to draw a blueprint for the East Asia economic community as early as possible, said Liu.

The first East Asia forum was held in 2003 as an exchange mechanism under the 10+3 framework.

[President Xi attends gala show for HK's 20th return anniversary](#)



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C, front), also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission, steps onto the stage and sings in chorus the song "Ode to the Motherland" with the performers and the audience during a grand gala marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, in Hong Kong, south China, June 30, 2017. (Xinhua/Ma Zhancheng)

President Xi Jinping attended a grand gala marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China at the waterfront Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center Friday night.

The gala brought together artists from both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the mainland, showcasing patriotism and Hong Kong's cultural diversity.

The show culminated when Xi stepped onto the stage in the company of HKSAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and Chief Executive-elect Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, and sang in chorus the song "Ode to the Motherland" with the performers and the audience.

Xi, also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission, arrived here Thursday to attend celebrations for Hong Kong's 20th return anniversary and the inauguration of the HKSAR's fifth-term government.

Inspection of the HKSAR is also on the schedule for his three-day stay.

[Grenfell inquiry "too narrow" says Jeremy Corbyn in letter to PM](#)

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, has today (Friday) written to the Prime Minister asking for the terms of the Grenfell fire inquiry to be broadened and for residents to be heard throughout the process.

In his letter, Jeremy expresses concern at the narrow terms of reference, saying: "it is clear to me from talking to Grenfell residents that their concerns and questions stretch beyond these narrow terms."

The Labour Leader suggests conducting a "two part inquiry, with the first part looking at the specific issues around Grenfell and reporting back quickly and the second part looking at the national issues."

Jeremy also urges an interim report, writing: "ongoing uncertainty and long delays would add to the trauma Grenfell residents and victims' families have already experienced."

Jeremy also asks the Prime Minister to commit to taking action now on areas not related to the outcome of the inquiry, including identifying all those missing or dead, amnesty for victims concerned at immigration status, providing permanent in-borough accommodation to all residents, committing up-front funding for councils, and overhauling building regulations.

The letter is attached and published in full here

<http://www.labour.org.uk/page/-/PDFs/Letter%20to%20The%20Prime%20Minister%20on%20Grenfell%2030.06.17.pdf>