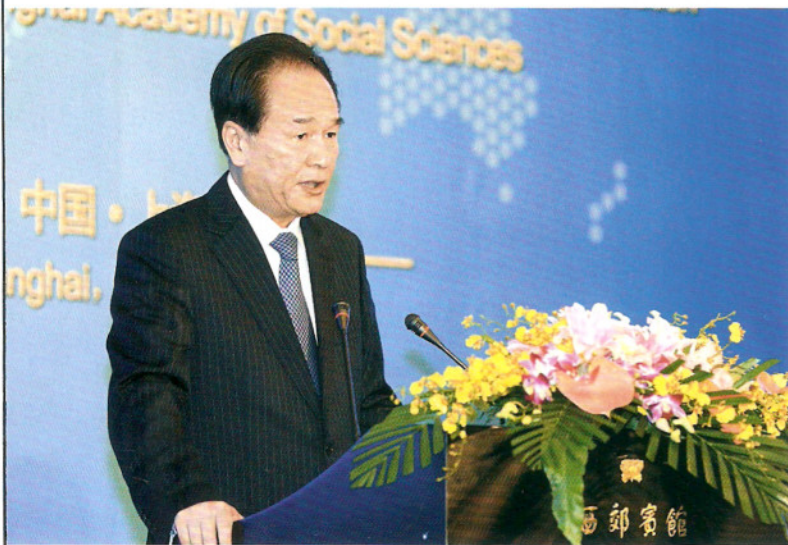


Chinese Dream, a Dream Influencing the World



Minister Cai Mingzhao, head of the State Council Information Office, delivers a speech.

By staff reporter HOU RUILI

THE International Dialogue on the Chinese Dream concluded in Shanghai on December 8, 2013. Attended by nearly 100 experts and scholars from 24 countries, the two-day event enacted international and cross-cultural dialogue on the latest research achievements on the Chinese Dream.

The Chinese Dream has strong appeal, as pointed out by Cai Mingzhao, minister of the State Council Information Office, in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony. "The realization of a dream for 1.3 billion people will be a major event in the history of humankind. A new China will take shape and make greater contributions to the world," Minister Cai said.

Chinese Dream Connotations

Zhang Weiwei, director of the Institute of China Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, lived overseas for a long while. On his way to attend the meeting, he chatted with a taxi driver. Learning the driver had two apartments in Shanghai worth RMB 3 million, but still claimed to be poor, Zhang told him he was better off than 50 percent of European people.

Over the past decade, the quality of life for most peo-

ple in the U.S.A. also has declined. The U.S. Household Income Index (HII) tracks monthly changes in real median annual household income over time. Using January 2000 as the starting point, with the HII set as equal to 100.0, the value of the index in each subsequent month shows household income measured as a percentage of the January 2000 base value. The figure in June 2011 was 89.4, which means that real incomes are more than 10 percent lower than they were over a decade ago.

"Today, the United States has less equality of opportunity than almost any other advanced industrialized country. Study after study has exposed the myth that America is a land of opportunity," said Nobel Laureate in Economics Joseph E. Stiglitz in February 2013.

"In comparison, over the past two decades, there's been an explosive growth of wealth in China," Zhang Weiwei said.

The Chinese nation was historically powerful and prosperous, but during the Opium War of 1839-42 and before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China suffered tremendously from invasions of Western and Japanese imperialists.

According to Zhang Xin, president of the Shanghai Century Publishing Group, what Chinese people first experienced of Western industrial civilization was the modern weaponry of the Opium War. To fight against invasions from Western colonists, China launched its own industrialization and modernization drive. The ensuing Self-strengthening Movement, Hundred Days' Reform and the Revolution of 1911 were Chinese people's attempts to acquire Western technology and institutions. However, due to their inadaptability to China's real situation, these attempts all ended in failure, leaving the country weak. After many twists and turns in exploration, it was only after the founding of the People's Republic of China that the country found a suitable road towards development.

In 1949 China's GDP was RMB 35.8 billion – today, the country can create wealth of over RMB 82 billion in a single day. China has become the world's second largest economy, with the world's largest foreign-exchange reserves and exports. However, due to its large population, China's per capita income is still below the world average. As the largest developing country, China still has to confront numerous problems and challenges in its course of modernization. Against this background, President Xi Jinping put forward the idea of the Chinese Dream, which encompasses that of the country, the nation and

each individual. The Chinese Dream has evoked Chinese people's desire and passion to pursue a better life, realize national rejuvenation and construct socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Qi Weiping, professor of the Political Science Department at the East China Normal University, holds that the significance of the Chinese Dream lies in the fact that a country with a population of 1.3 billion has been capable of realizing modernization through an alternative model. The fulfillment of the Chinese Dream will contribute to civilization worldwide.

Fulfilling the Chinese Dream

"The Chinese Dream needs to demonstrate the allure of China's political system and culture, its values, the cogency of Chinese diplomacy as well as the charm and affinity of Chinese leaders, and the cultural richness of its people. The Chinese Dream will be recognized and respected by the international community only after we have built such a wonderful country," professor of International Relations, Tsinghua University, Sun Zhe said.

To realize this, we must remove any doubts about China. Sun laid down three ways of achieving this. First, China should refrain from all autocratic practices in its politics and cultural traditions. At the same time, a modern governance system based on the constitution should be set up, as defined by the 18th CPC National Congress. This means China must make big changes in its decision-making process and political system.

Second, democracy in China will certainly have much

in common with its Western counterparts. We should unswervingly push forward democratic reforms, starting with basic democratic reforms, including enhancing democratic transparency, promoting rule of law and carrying out judicial reforms. Yet, to achieve genuine democracy, the constitution must be fully respected and the role of National People's Congress (NPC) – China's legislative body – reinforced.

This final element involves democracy in Chinese diplomacy and international relations. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the concept of a "Third World" are products of democratic international relations of a particular period. The key point at present is how to exert the will of the people and determine what role the army should play during peaceful development of China.

According to Qi Weiping, the problems China has encountered are shared by many other countries in the process of development. These include a growing income gap, widespread corruption, severe environmental pollution, and resource constraints. Since China has developed from a low starting point, further worsened by scores of setbacks in its development, it has taken considerable effort to solve the problems caused by a rigid system and mechanisms. In addition, China has achieved remarkable development in a short time. This compressed period has given rise to complex contradictions, issues and conflicts. Therefore, China is confronted with greater growing pains and stresses than any other country. Overcoming these hardships and achieving the Chinese Dream will require the wisdom and skills of the Chinese people. Qi



The International Dialogue on the Chinese Dream forum opened in Shanghai on December 7, 2013.