



## **Weekly Briefing**

**Bosnia-Herzegovina external relations briefing:  
Feedback and reception on the 70th anniversary of People`s Republic  
of China in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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## **Feedback and reception on the 70th anniversary of People`s Republic of China in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### **Media reports- three pictures**

*70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People`s Republic of China in Bosnian and Herzegovinian media has predictably been given less publicity than in some other regional countries. Main daily and weekly newspapers, magazines and news portals on October 1 reported on the military parade organized in Beijing, citing international agencies and leading media on the “political message” Beijing wanted to send to the world by displaying its military might on Tiananmen Square. Second to these reports were commentaries on current political challenges China faces in Hong Kong amid the continuing protests of students demanding more autonomy from the government in Beijing and uncertainties the ongoing Sino-US trade war brings to the Chinese economy and the world in general. Lastly, there were articles giving a short overview of Chinese political and economic development during the rule of the Chinese Communist Party and drawing conclusions of the CCP`s “success” in maintaining its rule for 70 years.*

### **Military parade and its political message**

In citing foreign agencies (Daily Mail, Reuters) on the parade in Beijing, Bosnian web portal Faktor.ba reported the number of soldiers (15 000), vehicles (600) and planes (160) participating on the parade, also capturing the news on Dongfeng 41 (DF-41, 31, 17), a nuclear headed missiles “that can reach USA soil in half an hour”. Oslobodjenje, Nezavisne, Dnevni Avaz mentioned missile while making comparison between the US and Chinese military strength. It was pointed out while the US military budget and overall strength continues to overshadow budgets of all other military powers in the world, China is steadily following behind. Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the world's largest army with two million men and has the second highest military budget (accurate estimations of which are source of controversy, since, as reported, the Chinese government is not transparent in providing the exact figures). Considerable word count has been given in explaining Chinese military aspirations “that concerned some neighboring countries”, modernization and technological advancement of Chinese Navy and Airforce, development of nuclear submarines, and increased ability to

project hard power in the waters of “surrounding Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines”, deemed very important for Chinese leaders. Military parade, according to regional N1 TV station, was about to convey the message of “Chinese paramount leader” Xi Jinping that “no power can shake up China's status or stop the Chinese people and nation from going forward”. Chinese President and CCP Chairman in ‘Mao Zedong style’ attire was also captured as a fact reminiscent of Cultural Revolution period in Chinese history and “reawaken authoritarianism within Chinese leading party”.

The speech delivered by Xi Jinping on the parade was given some length in all main BIH media. Some of the main points of the Xi`s speech, i.e. China striving to maintain prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macau and developing peaceful relations with Taiwan in order to continue the pursuit of complete unification of Chinese homeland, were juxtaposed with riots in Hong Kong that happened on the same day and with a statement given by “the Taiwanese government criticizing ‘dictatorship’ on the mainland”.

### **Chinese projected strength and underpinned challenges**

Regarding “the challenges concurrent to CCP`s display of China`s strength”, BIH media emphasized the resistance Beijing faces in trying to gain more control over Hong Kong. As the news threads on protests in Hong Kong were arriving from the beginning of June, mostly reprinting versions from the main international news agencies, Chinese day of independence was an occasion to angle Beijing perspective regarding 3 months-long protests. Nezavisne in an article from October 1 informs that “Beijing is open to tackle the issue from the both sides”, in reference to “resistance arriving from the Hong Kong people”. Klix.ba, leading news portal in BIH, quotes Guardian in expecting “full escalation of conflict” between HK police and protesters after the former started to use “real bullets and shoot at least one person”.

Another challenge reported crucial for the current Beijing government is ongoing trade war with the US. Without making extensive analysis of the issue that is actual for a while, BIH media informed on a ‘new package of tariffs’ Trump government plans to introduce days after the Chinese national holiday. Sino-US trade war issue has received a fair amount of commentaries and analyses in the last months. Trade protectionism and its global impact as well as more informed discussions on the current state of China- US trade negotiations were all topics that BIH public had a chance to get acquainted with through domestic media, public discussions and panels. Refreshing point of view has been given by the Chinese Ambassador to BIH, Ji Ping, who participated in a roundtable organized by Krug 99 (Association of

Independent Intellectuals-Circle 99) in June. In the news following Chinese National Day general remarks on stability of Chinese economy and the impact of the trade war between the two economic giants were mentioned in the context of the possible fallouts on global and BIH economy. Drastic exacerbation of which, as virtually all media outlets inferred, would had indirectly negative consequences on Bosnian economy too.

Some media had also mentioned Taiwan “which refuses unification with the mainland China”. In the wake of the presidential elections in ROC, “there are only few politicians with positive inclinations towards China”. Sarajevo-based Al-Jazeera Balkans has also commented that China is facing a problem with “unruly minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang, areas with big number of Muslims”. Following the thread, this media emphasized “the western region has attracted the attention of the international community and human rights groups over the situation of the Uighurs, who are said to have been detained in detention camps without trial.” This TV station has highlighted another problem “for the ruling communists - Beijing's sky full of smog.” As reported, despite attempts to reduce harmful emissions ahead of the anniversary, due to high humidity in the last days of September industrial and traffic air pollution have not been properly cleared.

### **70 years of CCP led China**

What was China 70 years ago and what it went through to become a leading world economy, second only to the US – this was one of the main issues that came into limelight on the 70<sup>th</sup> jubilee of the birth of new China. For most of media articles that gave a short overview of Chinese modern history, crucial was the period following Mao Zedong`s death when the country went the path of reforms and opening to outside world. Prevalent were keywords emphasizing achievements Chinese Communist Party accomplished in “turning out of poverty 400 million people”, “building a strong economy”, “controlling population growth”, “opening to the capitalism”, “holding a grip on national development”, etc. The mission of Chinese Communist Party in leading a backward and conflict-stricken country towards the path of peaceful, fast, relatively undisturbed and low-profiled prosperity was admitted as a task almost unmatched in the modern history. Comparative outlook with the Soviet Union and other post-WWII communist countries was made with typical remarks on a failure of the latter to perceive the necessity for economic reform. The fact that the CCP rule over China is closing the age of CPSU guiding former biggest communist country in the world is sometimes ominously mentioned when evaluating 70 years-long trajectory of Chinese success story.

Overall, the evaluations were positive in lining down past achievements, slight concerns were made about maintaining the growth while keeping one-party system intact and the prospects of future endeavors are put in question once Chinese economy has slowed down and confrontations with the global superpower in economic field is becoming more open.

### **Chinese reception for the National Day**

Activity marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in Bosnia and Herzegovina were organized by the Chinese Embassy to BiH in Holiday Inn Hotel in Sarajevo. The reception was attended by acting Chairman of Council of Ministers Denis Zvizdic, Serb Member of State Presidency Milorad Dodik (touted by Bosnian media as a main guest on the reception), President of the Republic of Srpska Zeljka Cvijanovic, members of Council of Ministers, central and federal level MPs, representatives of embassies (including Petar Ivancov, Russian ambassador to BiH) and other foreign and domestic dignitaries.

The Chinese ambassador before giving a speech asked everyone to look at a short video commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> jubilee and showing, as he called, a life of “the ordinary Chinese” as the best showcase of the achievements China has made in the last 70 years. In his words, video shows a truth that applies to the common man, political party and even a country: "where there is a will, there is a way."

In his speech he emphasized that for the past 70 years the Communist Party of China undertook responsibility of “magnificent revitalization” of Chinese nation. Formerly economically and culturally backward, thanks to the constant efforts of several generations of people, China has transformed significantly. Chinese economy has grown from the former USD 30 billion to USD 13.6 trillion in last year, an increase of more than 450 times. The Ambassador also added that China's life expectancy has been extended from "35 to 77", China is the second world economy today, while China's contribution to global economic growth has reached 30%.

Main point of his speech was: "China has changed a lot, but the original aspirations of the Chinese people will never change. China has experienced many years of war and is aware of the preciousness of peace, so we advocate peaceful development. We consider the world a community that everyone shares, that's why we set out the concept of building a community for the common future of humanity.”

Ambassador Ji Ping has also made remarks about “good relations between China and BIH, tourist and cultural exchanges that are expanding in the last few years, saying that the most visible example are Chinese faces that can be seen on the streets of BIH in increasing numbers.