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SPECIAL FEATURE

- 5 US-China Relations: The Mar-a-Lago Retreat and Implications for Bilateral Ties by *LYE Liang Fook*

The meeting in April 2017 at Mar-a-Lago between Trump and Xi had been positive for US-China relations. At the meeting, the two had elevated their existing bilateral talks to a more comprehensive framework and agreed to unveil a 100-day economic plan. Trump further expects China to play a bigger role in reining in North Korea.

- 15 Strong China-US Trade Relations Despite Occasional Squabbles by *Sarah Y TONG and LU Yue*

While widening bilateral imbalance persists, trade relations between China and the United States have continued to strengthen. China's surging trade surplus is increasingly domestically originated. Bilateral economic relations face many challenges, especially when the new US administration has stronger inward-looking tendencies.

- 30 The New Normal in Sino-Japanese Relations: Assessing Abe's Domestic Political Resources and Their Implications for Bilateral Ties by *ZHANG Yun*

The overwhelming victory in the Upperhouse election in July 2016 has given the Abe cabinet rich tangible political resources. However, Abe is also constrained by his intangible political resources. Sino-Japanese relations tend to be on a track of new normal of continued tension with low intensity and sustained dialogue of low quality.

- 38 Japan-US Economic Relations in the Post-Trans-Pacific Partnership Era by *CHIANG Min-Hua*

Although the Trump administration has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, Japan and the United States have agreed to discuss a post-TPP bilateral trade framework. The bilateral trade talks will be a significant step for Japan to remain economically connected to America.

ESSAYS

- 50 Li Zhanshu: A Key Player in Xi Jinping's Second Term by *Lance L P GORE*

Xi Jinping brought Li Zhanshu to Beijing in 2012 and Li was key to drumming up support for Xi to become the "core" of the Party leadership. Li is expected to join the next Politburo Standing Committee and play a more prominent role in Xi's second term.

C O N T E N T S

- 58 China's Naval Leadership Reshuffle, Evolving Maritime Strategy and Professionalisation *by LI Nan*

The relative importance of the South China Sea to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is evident in the appointment of a naval officer to command the Southern Theatre. The sea is critical in terms of its strategic location, deep depth, immense space and unfettered transit to the Western Pacific for operating PLA Navy's strategic nuclear submarines and major surface ships.

- 69 China's Belt and Road Initiative: The Push for Economic Globalisation *by YU Hong*

The growing resentment to globalisation in the West has given the Chinese an opportunity to lead in economic globalisation. It has leveraged on the various international platforms to promote China's approach to global economic development. Promotion of its "Belt and Road" initiative overseas marks China's attempt to put its own stamp on globalisation.

- 76 Renminbi Joins International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights Basket: Rationale and Significance *by WAN Jing*

The International Monetary Fund realises that reforms are needed to reduce the reliance on the US dollar as the only international reserve currency after the 2008 global financial crisis. It began to nurture super-sovereign reserve money where SDR (Special Drawing Rights) is the most favourable candidate. Joining SDR will push China's exchange rate reform to meet the standard of a real international reserve currency.

- 85 Explaining Unemployment among Uighurs in China *by SHAN Wei*

The series of ethnic violence in the Uighur community has been attributed to its high unemployment rate. Uighurs are disadvantaged in the job market mainly because of their poor Mandarin language ability. They are socially insulated from the Han-dominated business networks, and are less proactive and enterprising in work than Han. Overall, the unemployment issue of Uighurs is a product of multiple causes, which requires a comprehensive policy plan.

- 96 Can China's Pollution-Fighting Efforts Be a Model for Other Countries? *by PENG Bin*

China has devoted tremendous resources and efforts to improve its environment quality including the improvement of a legal framework and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. It has also embarked on promoting green development. While China had won the battle against poverty and set an example for developing countries, whether it could do the same in its battle against pollution remains unknown.