Strategic Governance in China's New Five-Year Plan

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Priya Jadoenathmisier and Tobias Knaack



China's New Five-Year Plan 2026-2030

Introduction

China's new Five-Year Plan, which reflects a move toward increased self-sufficiency, security-driven governance, and long-term structural resilience, is a turning point in the nation's strategic direction. The plan describes the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) attempts to protect national growth from both external pressures and internal weaknesses. It was devel-

oped during a period of increased geopolitical tension, global economic instability, and accelerated technical rivalry. Xi Jinping's "Holistic National Security Concept," which combines technological sovereignty, ecological sustainability, economic stability, and geopolitical positioning into a single policy framework, is at the heart of this change.

In this regard, the Plan emphasizes technical independence, especially in key areas like digital infrastructure, sophisticated manufacturing, and artificial intelligence. These initiatives are a direct reaction to growing export restrictions and supply-chain fragmentation in the West, which Beijing perceives as tactics to limit China's long-term development. In addition, the Plan emphasizes the significance of resource and ecological security, which is implemented through programs like the Beautiful China Initiative (BCI). In addition to addressing environmental deterioration, these policies seek to provide steady availability to food, energy, and other essential resources, areas that the CCP increasingly believes are crucial to maintaining national stability.

When taken as a whole, these goals show a five-year plan intended to strengthen China's strategic independence, lessen its vulnerability to geopolitical risk, and establish the nation as a key player in a changing global order. The three interrelated pillars of the plan, technological self-reliance, national security, and ecological security through the BCI, are examined in detail in this briefing.

Technological self-reliance

During the Communiqué on the new five-year plan, the strive for technological self-reliance has been elevated to a major objective of the Chinese Communist Party.This comes at a time in which China faces a lot of turbulence in its relation with the west. In the wake of the tech race between the two superpowers as well as a growing blockade of foreign markets for newer technologies, China's own innovation had to become a higher priority for both security and economic reasons.

From the communiqué we have no clear deadlines on certain development goals yet. We only know that the party referred back to the Digital China Initiative. This program doesn't have further clear implementations for the five-year plan as it was set until 2025. But from its priorities we can guess some methods of the Chinese Communist Party to achieve self-reliance. In the initiative, areas like AI development and infrastructure modernization have been mentioned, as well as the data industry and "digital talent development." The main goal was to raise the share of the digital sector in the national GDP up to 10%. But according to official numbers from the Chinese Government that sector only accounted for 4.4% of China's GDP in the third quarter. Therefore, we can expect a lot of investments for the digital sector to keep up with their development goals.

The communiqué on the new five-year plan seems to confirm these goals, as they mentioned a „historic opportunity“ by a „technological revolution.“ Probably this might be a hint to the rising AI sector. This also includes striving for a „leading position“ in newer technologies globally and promoting „breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields“.

Altogether the new five-year plan in the field of technological self-reliance can be expected to be a continuation of the Digital China initiative in order to secure itself from Western decoupling and confrontation as well as to bolster against its domestic issues.

National Security

Therefore, national sovereignty and regime stability are inextricably linked to technical autonomy.

2. National Security and Food/Resource Security

China's security architecture now includes food security as a fundamental component. China's internal food resilience is strengthened by the BCI's goal of 94% contamination-free agricultural soil by 2027, which also tightens centralized management of the agricultural sector. Two national security purposes are served by this policy direction:

As a result, food and resource security are positioned as strategic protections rather than just environmental objectives.

3. National Security and Energy Security

A key component of China's long-term national plan is energy security. Beijing must strike a compromise between the requirement to provide steady access to energy and its commitment to peak CO_2 emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.This entails

As a result, energy diversification is crucial for both national security and the environment.

4. National Security, Decoupling, and Geopolitics

A global environment characterized by growing geopolitical instability throughout East Asia, Western "de-risking" initiatives, and the escalating strategic competition between the United States and China is increasingly influencing China's national security policy. By incorporating security concerns into its fundamental economic planning, the CCP aims to lessen external vulnerabilities in response to stricter export regulations, supply-chain diversification away from China, and growing limitations on high-tech exports. This entails boosting local innovation capability, encouraging self-sufficiency in vital technologies, and quickening the "dual circulation strategy," which places an emphasis on safe supply chains and domestic markets as defenses against outside pressure.

In order to diversify geopolitical dependence and offset Western restraints, China is simultaneously stepping up its diplomatic and economic ties with non-Western allies, especially Russia and nations in the Global South. When considered collectively, these accomplishments demonstrate how the new Five-Year Plan treats economic resilience, technical autonomy, and international alignment as mutually reinforcing foundations of national security, integrating security and development more closely than before.

The Beautiful China Initiative

The "Beautiful China Initiative" (BCI) is a program that focuses on China's transformation into a green economy. For the continuation of the BCI, the new five-year plan will play an important role, as a number of deadlines set by the initiative will fall into this timeframe.

By the year 2027 there are three main goals. The first goal concerns the EV sector. By 2027, the threshold of EVs in Chinese traffic is to be increased up to 45%. With the EV market being one of China's most important innovative industries, this goal has a high importance for the Chinese government. By fulfilling this goal, it will not only reach a new milestone in fighting climate change but also send a signal to Western countries that China is keeping up on technological development and innovation.

The second goal for 2027 is to reach a condemnation of 94% of all soil used for agriculture. That comes together with political measures to further survey the agrarian sector to ensure the implementation of all standards. This raises the question whether higher standard controls might also be a tool for tighter economic coordination by state. With the ongoing trade conflict between China and the US, a tighter control on the market is planned on many levels throughout the BCI. Such controls may become an important tool for the Chinese government.

The third but less precise goal of the BCI for 2027 is to reach a greater reduction in carbon-based energy. This comes as Beijing tries to keep up with Western countries in their race for emission-free energy and technology, therefore being a big part in China's endeavor to gain a higher position in the technology sector.

Despite being imprecise, the last goal is very important for the Chinese government to reach its peak in CO_2 emissions in 2030. By that time, China's industry shall have reached an ultimate climax in its emission. Thereafter, the Chinese government wants to lower carbon emissions yearly. This shall become the foundation to reach an emission-free economy by the year 2060. This means that the next five years will reveal how China is about to ensure its energy security and reduce emissions while at the same time still investing in long-term projects like Siberia 2 and by handling its trade relations with countries like russia.

Conclusion

Altogether, from what one can tell about China's new 5-year plan, it can be estimated that it is going to be a continuation of other long-term strategies such as the Beautiful China Initiative or the Digital China Initiative. Its most important objectives will most probably be to prepare China for its upcoming structural and geopolitical challenges, including its transformation into a green economy, possible decoupling by western countries and boosting innovation in its domestic economy, as well as the modernization of the military in cases of possible armed conflicts in the Indo-Pacific Region. But still, it needs to be emphasized that those focuses are not necessarily new nor do they have the potential to announce some kind of historical U-turn. Just as the introduction of the communiqué expressed, the party is planning to "follow the leadership core and keep in alignment with the central party leadership; stay confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics; and uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position".

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