**Foreign policy**

**外交政策**

Showing off to the world

向世界展示

**The capital is about to host President Xi Jinping’s diplomatic coming-out party**

**首都北京即将为主席习近平举办外交大会**

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* [Timekeeper](http://www.economist.com/news/china/21631107-capital-about-host-president-xi-jinpings-diplomatic-coming-out-party-showing)



THE factories have closed down for a few days, and millions of cars have been ordered off the roads. Clear blue skies appearing over a usually smog-choked Beijing always mean one thing: a big event is about to get under way.

工厂已经被关闭好几天了,数百万辆车已经被勒令不许上马路. 原本烟雾缭绕的北京天空变得湛蓝无比意味着一件事情: 大事件即将发生。

From November 10th President Xi Jinping will welcome world leaders to this year’s Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit. Not since the Olympics in 2008 have so many leaders gathered in the capital, and they will include the heads of the United States, Russia and Japan. It is a defining moment for Mr Xi’s foreign policy. Having established himself at home as China’s most powerful leader since Deng Xiaoping, he now seems to want to demand a bigger, more dominant and more respected role for China than his predecessors, Deng included, ever dared ask for.

从11月10号开始，习近平主席将会开始迎接各国领导人来参加今年的APEC峰会。不仅仅那些2008参加了北京奥运会的领导人，他们还将包括美国、俄罗斯和日本的领导人。这对于习近平的外交政策来说是个重要的决定性时刻。在将自己树立为中国自邓小平以来最有权力的领导人之后，他如今似乎想要成为一个有史以来比他任何一个前任，包括邓小平在内，更伟大、更具有主导权且最受尊敬的角色

Respect begins by putting on a good face to guests. Chinese bullying over disputed maritime claims has done much to raise tensions in the region. But now Mr Xi appears to be lowering them. In particular, China’s relations with Japan have been abysmal. The government has treated Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe, with both venom and pettiness, implying he is a closet militarist. The relationship had sunk to such a low that it will count as notable progress if Mr Xi shakes Mr Abe’s hand—even if he does little more—at the summit.

以礼待客是获得尊敬的第一步。中国在领海争端声明问题上所表现出来的强势已经在本区域内带来了紧张感。但是，如今习近平企图缓和这个紧张感。尤其是中国与日本的关系已经很僵了。中国政府对日本首相安倍晋三一直都嗤之以鼻且不屑一顾，暗指他是个最接近的军国主义者的人。如此跌入谷底的关系，如果习近平能在峰会上和安倍握手----哪怕不多不少，这也将被认为是一个极大进步。

On November 11th and 12th, Mr Xi will host a state visit in Beijing for Barack Obama. It is the second summit with the American president, following one at Sunnylands in California in 2013. It will be a good show, with a scenic walk and all that. But the substance appears less clear. At the time of Sunnylands, there was much Chinese talk of a “new type of great-power relationship” with America. Yet since it implies a diminished role for America, at least in Asia, Mr Obama does not seem inclined to go along. The two men appear likely to co-operate in a few areas, including climate change, trade and investment. They will agree to a bit more communication over respective military movements in and over the seas near China. But hopes that cordiality at Sunnylands might lead the relationship to blossom may come to little.

11月11日和12日，习近平将会与巴拉克奥巴马进行会晤。这是与美国总统第二次在峰会上会晤，前一次是2013年在加利福尼亚阳光岛。这一定会是一个不错的过程，在风景优美地段散步以及其他一切宜人的环境。但是实质性的东西却显得不怎么清晰。阳光岛那次，大部分的话题都集中在与美国之间“一种新型的力量关系”。然而这暗示着对美国力量的削弱，至少是在亚洲，奥巴马显得并不买账。两位领导人似乎将会在一部分领域上合作，包括气候变化，贸易和投资。他们同意将会在中国领海和其上空的军事行动进行更多的交流。但是，原本希望阳光岛上的热忱交谈可以让两国关系开花结果的似乎是要落空了。

In truth, Mr Xi does not have much respect left for Mr Obama; the Chinese dismiss him as weak-willed in foreign policy. And so much of Mr Xi’s ambition lies elsewhere. Above all, the dream is to return China to its rightful place in a world in which, according to Bonnie Glaser of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think-tank, “China will be at the centre, and every other nation will have to consider China’s interests.”

This attitude is most familiar to China’s neighbours in the South China Sea and East China Sea. China has upset the Philippines by grabbing a disputed reef; Vietnam, by moving an oil rig into contested waters; Japan, by challenging its control over uninhabited islets; and even South Korea which, though on good terms, was concerned along with others when China declared an “Air Defence Identification Zone” over the East China Sea, demanding that planes inform it when entering it.

Yet Mr Xi has also courted friends under the catchphrase of “peaceful development”. He has pushed multilateral initiatives, including a new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which many of China’s neighbours, including India, have signed up to. A New Development Bank has also been set up with fellow “BRICs”—Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa.

One of Mr Xi’s playmates is President Vladimir Putin. China and Russia have a history of mutual distrust, but Mr Xi’s first trip abroad as president, in March 2013, was to Moscow. Since then the two countries have struck a long-stalled gas deal and, according toKommersant, a Russian newspaper, a pact on cyber-security. China backs Russia’s pro-Syrian stand in the UN Security Council and has refused to condemn Russia’s territorial incursions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine—though it loves to preach non-interference.

A strong thread that binds the two countries is American dominance in international affairs. “No country”, said Mr Xi at a security summit earlier this year to which Mr Putin was invited, “should attempt to dominate regional security affairs or infringe upon the legitimate rights…of other countries.” Mr Xi did not name America, but a month earlier Mr Obama had in Tokyo emphasised that America’s security pact with Japan extended to the Japan-controlled Senkaku islands, which China claims and calls the Diaoyu.

Is Mr Xi’s foreign policy succeeding? Only in parts. China’s maritime assertiveness has pushed some neighbours closer to Japan and America. But for long China will remain Asian nations’ biggest trading partner. It is busy pursuing regional and bilateral trade agreements while an American-led trade initiative, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is bogged down. At APEC Mr Xi will seek to build on those economic relationships. And, given China’s heft, by and large he will succeed.

And what of global ambitions? If Mr Xi wants a bigger role in the world, then China will have to engage better with the big issues, including the environment, terrorism and health. Here the picture is mixed. This week China and Russia together blocked an international plan for an ocean sanctuary in Antarctica. On counter-terrorism, China puts more effort into getting everyone to acknowledge it faces an al-Qaeda-type threat in Xinjiang than it helps in much worse terrorist hotspots.

Yet global health is an example of how Chinese policy can change. Only a few weeks ago, during preparations for Mr Xi’s summit with Mr Obama, officials appeared to see their American counterparts’ obsession with Ebola as proof of Americans always coming to them only with the latest irritating pebble in their shoe, as Douglas Paal of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think-tank, puts it. But since then China has announced a trebling of its commitment to fighting Ebola, to $120m, making it the second-most generous of any country. One way or another, China’s rise continues.