

WORLD

China’s absence at key space forum lamented

Washington urged not to ‘weaponize’ visas to target normal exchanges

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China’s absence from an important global space conference was a missed opportunity for collaboration, a US scientist said during the 2019 International Astronautical Congress, or IAC, on Wednesday.

The Chinese delegation, whose members include Wu Yanhua, vice-administrator of the China National Space Administration, was absent from the weeklong 70th IAC, which concludes on Friday in Washington.

The moderator of an opening plenary panel where Wu was expected to speak on Monday said Wu’s absence was due to a “scheduling conflict”.

But the Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed on Wednesday that it was because of a visa issue, and it urged Washington not to “weaponize” visas and hinder normal international cooperation.

Clive R. Neal, a planetary scientist at University of Notre Dame, said: “I think it was hoped that China would be present so that multilateral talks could be undertaken. Everyone was disappointed. I am saddened that the political situation between our two countries gives the perception that we are in opposition.”

The world’s top two economies have been locked in a trade war since early last year, with tensions only starting to ease following “substantial progress” in their latest round of talks earlier this month.

While observers say an increasing number of Washington insiders perceive China as a military and eco-

nom ic threat to be confronted, two in three people in the United States prefer friendly cooperation and engagement with China, according to the 2019 Chicago Council Survey, released in September. The annual national survey of a representative group of US people examines views on US foreign policy.

Neal, appointed by the National Academy of Sciences Executive Office in April as a new member of the Committee on Astrobiology and Planetary Science, was in Washington to attend the annual event. He said the absence of China led to disappointment over a missed opportunity.

“I think it is critical that the scientists keep working together as best as they can so communication lines are kept open,” Neal said in an interview.

He said US scientists are working hard to maintain collaboration with their Chinese peers.

“At this level, there are no strained relations. I think also at the NASA level, relations would be good. Both our countries need to solve this issue at the political level,” he said.

Speaking at the opening of the conference, US Vice-President Mike Pence said that with renewed US leadership in space, the US seeks to work closely with “like-minded, freedom-loving nations”.

Neal said the vice-president “was playing to an American audience”.

“I am not a politician, but I think communication and dialogue are critical to stop misunderstandings,” he said. “Both Chinese and American scientists need to work with their political officials to show we can cooperate.”

Commenting on matters discussed at the IAC on Monday, Erwan Beauvois, a space operations engineer from Thales Alenia Space in France, tweeted: “Dodging the spicy questions :-/ so many people asked about China and international cooperation. M. Pence’s speech of this morning surely didn’t resonate well to most of the international partners either. #IAC2019”

China hosted the 64th IAC in Beijing in 2013, and participates in the conference every year. It has always championed multilateral cooperation in space exploration, according to a white paper on China’s space activities in 2016.

In an interview in January, James W. Head, a professor of geological science and planetology at Brown University, who worked on all of the Apollo space missions in the 1960s and 1970s, said he was still hopeful for greater China-US space cooperation.

“There are always political tensions between countries. But the fact that the US-Soviet Cold War ended in an international space station with American astronauts being launched on Russian rockets, and very close cooperation, gives hope for future cooperation,” Head said. “Many policymakers see it as a way to reduce tensions.”

As of Wednesday night, Wu of the China National Space Administration was still listed as a speaker at the annual IAC event’s opening panel on the IAC website.

“I miss an important space agency in this panel. Where is China?” read the most-liked question from the site displayed on the screen, which served as a background on the stage for panel speakers on Monday.

United front



Nearly two dozen Republicans from the US House of Representatives field questions from reporters after Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper arrived to testify at a closed-door deposition as part of the Democrat-led impeachment probe into President Donald Trump. They stormed into the hearing room and caused a five-hour delay to the proceedings in Washington on Wednesday. CARLOS JASSO / REUTERS

Briefly

JAPAN
Abe, S. Korea PM meet amid freeze in ties

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met his South Korean counterpart on Thursday and warned frayed relations should be mended, but appeared to suggest it was Seoul’s responsibility to make that happen. Bilateral ties between the neighbors are at rock-bottom over a dispute related to the use of forced labor during World War II, with the countries trading retaliatory sanctions. “The relationship between Japan and South Korea is now in an extremely serious situation, but this important

relationship should not be left like this,” Abe said during a meeting with South Korea’s Lee Nak-yeon. Lee, who was in Japan to attend the new Japanese emperor’s formal enthronement ceremony earlier this week, handed a letter from South Korean President Moon Jae-in to Abe, the ministry said.

ISRAEL
Gantz gets a shot at forming government

Israel’s former military chief Benny Gantz was tasked on Wednesday with forming the next government, but he has few options after last

month’s elections left him in a near tie with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu was given the first opportunity to form a government after assembling a large right-wing bloc but announced this week that he had failed to build a 61-seat majority. Gantz faces similarly steep odds, raising the possibility that Israel will hold a third election in less than a year. President Reuven Rivlin formally granted the mandate to Gantz, who will have 28 days to form a coalition. It is the first time in over a decade that anyone besides Netanyahu has been given the task.

AFP—AP

Experts exchange ideas on promoting Zhuhai’s city image

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The third 21st Century Maritime Silk Road China (Guangdong) International Communication Forum became a valuable platform for the host city to learn from experts how to build up its city image.

Held in this coastal city of Zhuhai in South China’s Guangdong province from Oct 21 to 23, the event attracted more than 300 government officials, consular officers, experts, entrepreneurs and media representatives from around the world.

Many of them shared what impression the city had left on them and what Zhuhai needs to gear up efforts to promote the city farther and wider during the forum.

Among them are Warren Mok, a tenor and opera performer whose ancestral roots are in Zhuhai, and John Hedin, an American editor who used to work in Zhuhai for a long time.

“I’ve been to Zhuhai for numerous times and I’ve witnessed its changes,” said Mok.

“Zhuhai is an ideal city for living as well as for doing business. I really love the city as it is never too crowded, noisy, nor messy; and I think Zhuhai is the perfect place for the international communication forum.”

Mok, offspring of a Hong Kong businessman from Zhuhai’s Huitong village, is now one of the best-known tenors in the world and a top three in China.

Basing his viewpoint on his profession and understanding of the city, he suggested that Zhuhai should pay greater effort to developing its cultural industry as culture is one of the important indicators to measure the degree of development of a city.

“Zhuhai already has two opera houses and should establish a symphony orchestra and annually organize music festivals and vocal music competitions to help improve the city’s cultural prowess and build the city into a tourism city for culture,” he said.

Hedin, a retired editor from Kingston, New York, used to work for Zhuhai Special Zone Daily for several years.

He is now an advisor of the city’s English website cityofzhuhai.com.



Representatives attend the City Image Building Under the Belt and Road Initiative forum during the third 21st Century Maritime Silk Road China (Guangdong) International Communication Forum held in Zhuhai, Guangdong province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



From left: Visitors from China and abroad watch the photo exhibition during the event. Warren Mok, a tenor and opera performer, gives a speech during the event.



Hedin attached great importance to news spreading.

“No one I spoke to back in the US had heard of the Maritime Silk Road. Not only that, but a fellow traveler

whose company deals with two firms in Zhuhai also asked what it was,” he said. He called for teacher exchanges between Maritime Silk Road countries, a Greater Bay Speakers Bureau

that spins its speakers off to community groups, and a Maritime Road News Service that promotes human-interest stories, according to a report on cityofzhuhai.com. “Not just infra-

structure, deals, politics, and statistics,” he was quoted as saying.

Zhang Zhi’an, dean of the School of Communication and Design at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, the provincial capital, said that city image promotion should be a kind of city storytelling that the public will participate extensively in via such platforms as social media and the internet.

“Zhuhai has rich choices of popular scenic spots as well as big events including the annual China International Circus Festival, the biennial Airshow China and the international communication forum, which can be capitalized on for the public to integrate their personal feelings and narrate their city stories from their personal perspectives,” he said.

Angus Deaton, 2015 Nobel Prize laureate in economic sciences and professor of economics and international affairs at Princeton University, said he was deeply impressed by the rapid development of the Bay

Area. The Bay Area is a beautiful region and is expected to become a new engine of world economic development and an innovation center of science and technology, he was quoted by local media as saying.

Deaton said Zhuhai is a beautiful city with many scenic spots and has done a good job in developing its tourism industry, adding that he will recommend the city as a tourism destination to his friends.

David Gosset, founder of the Europe-China Forum, said Zhuhai’s peerless advantage lies in its good geographical position to Hong Kong and Macao which offers opportunities for the city to expand cooperation with the two Chinese special administrative regions and develop its economy.

Meanwhile, the city has a low population density but large forested area which is conducive to sustainable development, he said.

Addressing a parallel forum on city image promotion on Tuesday during the international communication forum, Long Guangyan, head of the city’s publicity department, said, “The sub-forum provides a good opportunity for the city to dwell academically on how to promote city image, to expand exchanges and enhance mutual understanding with the rest of the world.”

According to the official, Zhuhai has launched a series of publicity events including unveiling the city’s logo and promotional video, publishing bilingual brochures and books to help further raise the city’s image and promote the city abroad, showcasing the city to the world from a new perspective in the past year.

On the same occasion, Zhuhai Media Group signed a series of cooperative agreements with Macao Commercial Post International Group, Telediffusion of Macao Co and Macao Cable TV to expand and deepen their exchanges and cooperation.

Sun Xijiong, chairman of Zhuhai Media Group, said that it will join forces with its Macao counterparts so that both sides can contribute more favorable stories about Zhuhai and Macao to better serve construction of the Bay Area and expand mutual cooperation in the years ahead.