

# **Xi Jinping warns he is ready to 'fight bloody battles' against China's enemies - Activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan Targeted**

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**Emboldened president reserves strong words for activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan who want to 'split China'.**

Chinese president Xi Jinping has delivered a nationalistic speech in which he vowed the nation would "take our due place in the world" and was ready "to fight bloody battles against our enemies".

Xi also promised "rejuvenation" and warned against attempts to erode China's unity during a speech at the close of the annual session of the National People's Congress, the country's annual parliament often derided by experts as little more than a show that lacks serious policy debate.

This year the legislature removed term limits on the presidency, paving the way for Xi to rule for life. He was unanimously re-elected to a second term.

"The Chinese people have understood since ancient times that nothing is free," he said. "To be happy, one must fight for it."

The nationalist tone and content of the speech was mainly directed at a domestic audience, according to Merriden Varrall, director of the East Asia Program at the Lowy Institute in Sydney.

"Removing term limits ruffled a few feathers in the Party and Xi is aware there might be some tough times ahead, especially with Trump threatening a trade war," Varrall said. "He wants to tap into nationalism and show he is the person who can confront those challenges."

Xi portrayed a world seeking to combat China's peaceful rise on the global stage, and the need to push ahead at all costs. At the same time he worked to calm fears of an increasingly assertive foreign policy, saying: "China's development will not pose a threat to any other country".

"Only those who are accustomed to threatening others will see everyone as a threat," he added.

Xi also had strong words for activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Politicians in Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous city handed back in China by the UK in 1997, have advocated for greater self determination in recent years, with some calling for outright independence.

Elections in 2016 in Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy claimed by China, saw a president elected who is wary of closer ties with the mainland.

"Any actions and tricks to split China are doomed to failure and will meet with the people's

condemnation and the punishment of history,” he said to a chorus of loud applause from the assembled officials.

“The Chinese people share a common belief that it is never allowed and it is absolutely impossible to separate any inch of our great country’s territory from China.”

In contrast to Xi’s speech, premier Li Keqiang focused on reassuring investors and businesses during his annual highly scripted press conference where questions are pre-screened.

“China’s economy has been so integrated with the world’s, that closing China’s door would mean blocking our way for development,” he said. “China’s aim is to ensure that both domestic and foreign firms, and companies under all kinds of ownership structure, to be able to compete on fair terms in China’s large market.”

Foreign business have for years complained government regulations have produced an uneven playing field in China. Some of those policies, such as forced technology transfers and intellectual property theft, have drawn sharp criticism from Donald Trump.

“They’re talking about reforms but not as the international community understands them, China will still come first,” Varrall said.

The comments of openness come as the threat of a global trade war looms with the US imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum and reports Trump may target Chinese products specifically in future tariffs. The US is poised to announce new duties on \$60 billion worth of Chinese technology and consumer goods annually, Reuters reported.

“Like rowing a boat, opening up is a two-way movement entailing mutual efforts,” Li said.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/20/xi-jinping-warns-fight-bloody-battles-chinas-enemies>