

Interview of Mr. Gilbert 13 September 2020

Seven questions (edited)

1. You have been in China for 40 years. Thank you for witnessing the development of China in the past 40 years and your great contribution to this. You are a witness and pioneer of China's reform and opening up. Can you talk about the changes in Chinese society from the perspective of a foreign witness?
2. What are your habits in Beijing? How do you usually spend your day? What impact did the epidemic have on your life?
3. In your opinion, what are the advantages of the “dual cycle” development model proposed by China this year for responding to the current international situation?
Notes GVK: China's dual-cycle model, which emphasizes domestic demand in China and trade with the fast-growing developing countries, is a necessary economic policy for dealing with the future world. China is modernising its technologies and rationalising its domestic supply chains to become more independent of foreign production. However, this strategy towards greater self-sufficiency is at the expense of efficiency, as it does not take advantage of the international division of labour. Chinese exporters turn to domestic consumers as coronavirus hits overseas markets. But the Chinese government is obviously willing to accept these efficiency losses, although they will slow down economic growth in the longer term.
All told, the emphasis on “dual circulation” is a natural policy change given the new global dynamics, suggesting that China is gradually turning inward, further strengthening the deglobalisation trend. At the end of the day, China's massive domestic consumption will be the most important driver in this policy move.
4. As the executive chairman of the Foreign Expert Committee of the Belt and Road International Talent Special Fund of the State Administration of Foreign Experts (SAFEA), can you tell us with what the members of the Foreign Expert Committee usually have to deal with?
5. How do you evaluate the impact of the epidemic on China's economy in 2020? Do you think China's economy can continue to develop in the next two years? Can the global economy recover?
6. China has proposed a new Belt and Road strategy. Can you talk about the ideas and suggestions for international cooperation under this strategic framework?
7. If you look at China's role in the future development of the world, can Chinese companies break through foreign restrictions and become world-class companies?