

Jeremy Corbyn statement on Prince Philip

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader

of the Labour Party, commenting on the news that Prince Philip is to retire from carrying out royal engagements, said:

“I would like to pay tribute to Prince Philip following his decision to retire from public service.

“He has dedicated his life to supporting the Queen and our country with a clear sense of public duty.

“His Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme has inspired young people for more than 60 years in over 140 nations.

“We thank Prince Philip for his service to the country and wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement.”

Fanciful figures

This week we saw a couple of sets of fanciful figures intrude on the debate. There was Labour’s 10,000 police at £30 a year salary, hastily adjusted to £8000 a year, still way below what we normally pay our officers. Then there was the FT’s take on the EU bill for the UK leaving the Union, at Euro 100bn.

The first sets of numbers were mistakes, and have been adjusted upwards as much Labour spending will need to be to make it realistic. £300 m a year is nearer the mark.

The second story that the UK owes up to Euro 100 bn is just silly. There are no legal obligations to pay beyond the sums we owe for our regular contributions over the next twenty two months before we leave. If they want a political deal on money, then of course they would need to knock off our share of the assets. I don’t see that is a sensible or attractive way to proceed for them. They should just accept the Treaty that allows for no special bill.

The UK should continue to be friendly, outward going and positive about it

all. We should continue to stress the great deal we are proposing for our future relationship. Free access to our market for all their exporters. Guarantees for all their citizens living and working in the UK. Continued large UK contributions to the defence, security, research and culture of Europe.

Stable and strong leadership is needed by the UK, to be optimistic but to be firm in resisting silly proposals that have no basis in law or political reality.

The EU disobliging briefings sound as if they are coming from people who suddenly realise their negotiating strategy of pressurising a member state into seeing it their way is not going to work. The EU thought the UK would want to stay in the Single market Custom Union. They could then seek to charge us for that. It was always a silly assumption, as the UK clearly wants to make its own free trade agreements with the rest of the world which means leaving the Customs Union. The UK was also clear it wanted to stop paying the money. It is the Commission who are most worried about the loss of the UK's contributions, at its their budgets and salaries that will suffer.

The way countries pay to trade with other reluctant countries is via tariffs. If the EU wants to put tariffs up against us, it can only do so to a limited extent under WTO rules. It would be a lot cheaper than the bills we are hearing about. In return we can impose more tariffs on them given the nature and volume of their exports to us. That is why I have always thought it likely in the end they will want tariff free trade. It is, of course, always possible they wish to self harm. However, it seems it is more the EU Commission that favours a tough approach as the harm is to the member states, not to the Commission itself. The member states are more likely to wake up to the harm it could do their export companies and especially their farmers and want a more sensible approach.

Promoted by Fraser McFarland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU

[Chinese cuisine to take center stage at Expo](#)

Jiang Junxian, president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

The China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion will make its debut at Expo Astana 2017 later this year, offering a gourmet guide to China and its unique culinary culture.

The Expo, an international specialized exhibition to be held in the Kazakh

capital from June 10 to Sept. 10, will provide a platform to showcase Chinese culinary culture by introducing the wider dimensions of Chinese food to the world.

Li Yaguang, curator of the China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion and vice president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, introduced at a press conference on Wednesday that the pavilion, covering a 1.7-sq.-km site, will display a wide range of China's local foods and snacks.

The pavilion is a two-storied building – Chinese Snacks Culture Hall on the ground floor, displaying well-known local snacks, and Chinese Cuisine Culture Hall on the second floor, displaying crafted dishes representing the major cuisines of China.

Li Yaguang, curator of the China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion and vice president of the Chinese Cuisine Association, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

“The Expo platform will give a huge boost to Chinese food brands and food-related industries and provide opportunities for establishing international cooperation,” said Li.

Beijing Jiankun Catering Group will be responsible for all the pavilion's catering services.

Many gourmet cities with famous snacks are ready to actively participate in the Expo, including Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing. Famous snack brands, such as Qingfeng Steamed Bun Shop and Lucky Wonton are applying for participation.

Since Kazakhstan is a crucial node on the Belt and Road, Expo Astana is drawing much attention and participation from China's central and local governments.

According to Xu Li, executive curator of China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion, a total of 23 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have confirmed participation in Event Weeks and Event Days to be held during the expo.

Xu Li, executive curator of China Cuisine & Culture Pavilion, makes a speech at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. [Photo provided to China.org.cn]

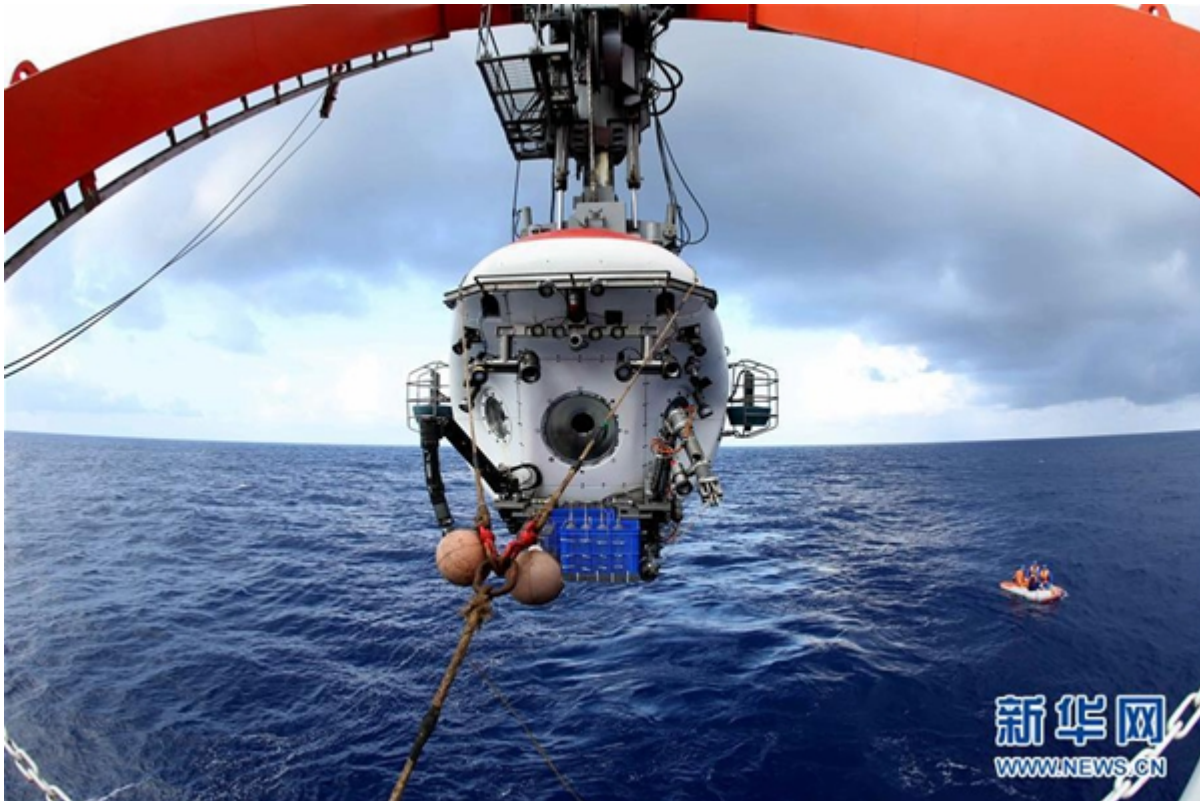
The Chinese Cuisine Association will work together with local governments during the expo to hold a series of major events to show China's rich culinary culture and extensively promote exchanges between China and Kazakhstan.

The 2017 World Expo will attract nearly 150 countries and international organizations.

Since this year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kazakhstan and the Year of Tourism of the two

countries, Expo Astana 2017 holds great significance for the development of bilateral relations as well as the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative.

[China to begin building two new ships for 2019](#)



Jiaolong, China's manned submersible, conducted its fourth dive on April 30 around the Zhenbei Seamount in the South China Sea. [Photo/Xinhua]

China will soon begin building its first marine resources survey ship and its first mother ship for manned submersibles, according to the State Oceanic Administration.

Hu Xuedong, deputy director of the administration's Deep Sea Department who oversees China's ocean exploration programs, said at a news conference in Beijing on Wednesday that the construction work on the two vessels will start before July.

The survey ship will be built at China State Shipbuilding Corp's Huangpu Wenchong Shipbuilding Co in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The mother ship for manned submersibles will be made at China Shipbuilding Industry Corp's Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

"The two ships will have world-class technological and operational capacity.

They will be able to travel at least 6,000 nautical miles on each journey," Hu said. "Their service will extensively improve our capabilities in ocean surveying, deep-sea science and marine environmental protection."

The ships, which have yet to be named, will be commissioned in the first half of 2019, he said.

Currently, China Marine Research Vessels operates 17 long-range oceanographic research ships and 15 coastal water survey ships.

According to the State Oceanic Administration, the marine resources survey ship will be 98 meters long and 17 meters wide, and will have a displacement of 4,000 metric tons. It will have an advanced electric propulsion system.

The vessel will carry more than 70 kinds of scientific research equipment and will be capable of conducting highly accurate long-term surveys in a wide range of fields such as marine geology, marine ecology and ocean-atmosphere systems.

The mother ship, which will serve China's manned submersible Jiaolong, will also have a displacement of around 4,000 tons. It will support Jiaolong's operations and handle and analyze samples taken by the submersible, according to the administration.

Named after a mythical dragon, Jiaolong is China's first manned deep-sea research submersible. It reached its deepest depth—7,062 meters—in the Mariana Trench in June 2012. Currently, the Jiaolong is based on the Xiangyanghong 09, a survey vessel that has been in service since 1978. The new vessel will be the first dedicated mother ship for the submersible.

Hu said the mother ship will also assist the nation's effort to build a manned deep-sea station that the government plans to put into operation around 2030.

Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of industry magazine Modern Ships, said the two ships will be sophisticated in terms of technology and structure, so their construction will be a challenge to shipbuilders.

[Thousands sent to fight new forest fire in Inner Mongolia](#)



The fire broke out at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday in the Beidahe forest in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. [Photo/Xinhua]

A second big fire broke out in China's largest forest in the Greater Hinggan Mountains on the same day a cross-border fire from Russia was extinguished.

The fire broke out at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday in the Beidahe forest in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. More than 8,300 firefighters are working to extinguish the blaze, according to regional fire authorities.

By press time, the fire had engulfed about 50 square kilometers of forest. The firefighters – 2,590 of whom are armed police officers – and 12 helicopters have been sent.

Strong winds, mountainous terrain, and dry vegetation made the firefighting "extremely difficult", according to an official statement from the fire authorities.

The blaze was thought to be caused by a stoker employed at a forestry station who improperly disposed of ashes and other residue from a fire. The suspect is in custody, the State Forest Fire Prevention Headquarters said.

Wang Haizhong, deputy director of the general office of the headquarters, warned that over the next 10 days China will face an increasing risk of forest fires due to an expected rise in temperatures across the nation.

Wang was quoted in a Xinhua interview as saying that China still lags behind developed countries in terms of investment in forest fire prevention.

In some poorly prepared western provinces, he said, the expenditure on fire prevention was less than 10 cents per hectare of forest, while in the United States and Canada it can reach \$2 per hectare.

The temperature in Inner Mongolia this spring is higher than in previous years, posing a higher fire risk for the region's forests.

A cross-border fire broke out Sunday in another area. That fire was put out on Tuesday and cleanup is underway.