

Focus: Current Situation and Challenges of the Xi Jinping Regime (Summary)

Essay: The Chinese Communist Party's Historical Resolution at its Centenary

Yoshihiro Ishikawa (Professor, Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University)

The resolution on the history of the Communist Party of China adopted on the occasion of the 100-year anniversary of the Party's founding was issued with a strong awareness of the historical resolutions that had been formulated under the leadership of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, respectively. Having twice become the subject of resolutions, history has been "politically caged" under the Party's exclusive control. The option not to issue a resolution on history to correct the distorted relationship between politics (the Party) and history was available. However, in anticipation of an extraordinary extension of his term, General Secretary Xi Jinping issued a resolution in which his achievements were written large. Through the adoption of this new historical resolution, history will continue to be tied to the Party's yoke, but this does not guarantee that the achievements of the Xi administration will long be remembered. Using the resolution to record history could pave the way for another historical resolution in future to deny Xi's achievements. To issue a resolution on history for one's own sake means that one must be prepared for the revenge of history that may come.

1 Xi Jinping Aims to Become the 'Godfather of the Chinese Nation': Political Developments Based on Changes in Priority Policies and Leadership Style

Takashi Suzuki (Associate Professor, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Aichi Prefectural University)

This article examines the nature and future direction of the "stability" of the Xi Jinping regime from the following aspects: (1) changes in Xi Jinping's power within the ruling system; and (2) changes in the relationship between the ruling system and society as seen in the important policies promoted by the leadership.

With respect to (1), Xi Jinping's unchallenged power and authority have already been established. From a short- to medium-term perspective, there are no political opponents or factions capable of overturning Xi Jinping's status as supreme leader. Regarding (2), however, there are two risks that could destabilize Xi Jinping's personal power and the rule of the Chinese Communist Party: Xi's political orientation and leadership style, and the growing nationalistic mentality of the Chinese people.

Moreover, the political iconography that has been emerging when assembling pieces like a jigsaw puzzle is the image of Xi Jinping as the "godfather" of the Chinese people who, by maintaining a long-term government, is striving for a fairer distribution of wealth among his "children" of the next generation, at times nipping the rebellious bud of democratization and at other times spurring on a spirit of competition through school education and home discipline training to achieve the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation".

2 The Xi Jinping Administration's Growth Strategy: Are "Domestic Circulation" and "Common Prosperity" Compatible?

Kai Kajitani (Professor, Graduate School of Economics, Kobe University)

This paper regards the “domestic circulation” that the Chinese government has been trying to advance to be continuation of its earlier “supply-side reforms” that encourage the mobilization of production elements and aim for growth patterns different from those under extensive growth, and positions China’s innovation-driven industrial policy as a growth strategy to support this. On the other hand, concerns in promoting China’s “domestic circulation” include the corporate sector’s debt problems caused by excessive monetary easing in the process of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, growing financial insecurity among real estate companies, and the tightening of restrictions on platform companies in the name of “common prosperity,” an idea brought up in the summer of 2021. Still, Beijing will almost certainly focus on improving supply-side efficiency as its growth strategy going forward. Under the slogan of “common prosperity,” the Communist Party is trying to allay the resentment of the working class by hitting certain “celebrities” without improving the fundamental causes of economic disparities.

3 The Present State of the Belt and Road Initiative

Shino Watanabe (Professor, Faculty of Global Studies, Sophia University)

China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in the fall of 2013, was originally conceived as a gigantic economic zone that would construct a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. However, the plan was not clearly defined at the outset as a national strategy. Over the past eight years, the BRI’s layout has been completed and its details fleshed out as it has been flexibly adapted to the environment surrounding China and to China’s diplomatic challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has been forcing further changes to the BRI since the end of 2019. This article analyzes the discourse of Chinese leaders and official documents to clarify the history of the BRI. It will then demonstrate that the implementation of the BRI has been unfolding in the direction in which China tries to realize the “democratization of international relations” vis-a-vis its BRI partner countries as a way for reforming the global governance system, and that the focus in the future will be on constructing a Health Silk Road, a Green Silk Road, a Digital Silk Road, and Roads on Poverty Reduction.

4 China as a Hegemonic Power over Advanced Technology

Atsushi Sunami (President, Sasakawa Peace Foundation / Director of the SciREX center and the Executive Advisor to the President and adjunct professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies)

The Biden administration in the United States has launched a series of economic security policies that include reorganizing the semiconductor supply chain. In particular, the US Innovation and Competition Act was designed to enable the US to compete with China for supremacy over advanced technologies. The United States has expressed a clear sense of crisis over China’s expanded presence in the international community as a “great power” that has enhanced its national power at a faster pace than expected. What has made China’s rise a reality is the remarkable improvement in China’s ability to innovate in science and technology.

Since the founding of the PRC, China has been steadily driving science and technology innovation and focusing on the development of core technologies by implementing stable policies from a long-term perspective under the strong leadership of national leaders. The country is currently aiming to realize President Xi Jinping’s “Chinese Dream” of building a “independent innovative country” and becoming the world’s leading science and technology powerhouse. “Made in China 2025,” which aims to make China the world’s top manufacturing power by the PRC’s centennial anniversary in 2049, will be a driving force for new economic growth to realize the Chinese Dream. China is scrambling to build a civil-military fusion innovation system to survive the battle for supremacy

with the United States in the areas of AI and quantum technology as well.

As a neighbor to China, a major economic power in a new big data-based era, Japan is now at a crossroads in determining what position it will assume in addressing the competition for hegemony over core technologies.

5 The Ideological Background of China's "Digital Leninism": Focusing on "Social Governance" and "Security Perspectives"

Junko Oikawa (Associate Professor, Chuo University)

This essay seeks to decipher China's "digital Leninism" and analyze its ideological background. While mainly discussing "social governance" and "security perspectives," it points out that the Xi Jinping administration's social governance is big data governance that utilizes cutting-edge digital technology. It will then examine the "security perspectives" based on "Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century" in 2021. The top priority of Xi's administration is to maintain the current system and ensure the Party's security.

The big data dictatorship based on digital Leninism has been strengthened under the "social governance community" advocated by the Xi administration since the COVID-19 pandemic began. This trend is expected to continue and gain further momentum in future with the prolongation of the Xi regime. The impact of "digital Leninism" on not only China but also the international community needs to be critically examined, and serious reflection on democracy is also required.

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