

Chapter 13

ON THE GOVERNANCE OF CHINA: VIEWS ON THE TWO CENTENARY GOALS, A NEW TYPE OF REVOLUTION, AND INTERNATIONAL AND POLITICAL REFORMS

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Introduction

Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China* (2014) is a collection of speeches that the Chinese paramount leader delivered from November 15, 2012 to June 13, 2014, which created quite a stir in the Chinese political world as well as in the international scene. It is compiled by the Foreign Languages Press which aims to utilize the book to present China's history, culture, and social system¹ to the world. As part of the state publicity apparatus, the Foreign Languages Press contributes to the discussion of "what is fit to know" about China as well as state publishers provide ample information as to how the Chinese Communist Party

¹ As described in the publisher's note, *The Governance of China* (2014).

(CCP) would like to project itself (Shambaugh 2007, 25-58).² The book's 79 pieces are arranged into 18 chapters that address major "publicity" dilemma that the Chinese government is facing as well as promote the distinctiveness of Chinese civilization and its contribution to the world in the past and in the years to come.

The book in its entirety deals with a multitude of topics highlighted by the People's Republic of China (PRC) as case in point of their efforts to tell China's story to the world. This paper would discuss significant insights that could illuminate China watchers on the story of China and how it wants to depict itself to the world. First, setting the domestic situation of development as viewed by the CCP's ideology; second, China's plan in instigating a new type of revolution in their country; third, an insight towards a regionally shared development; and lastly, tackling the issues that center on their agenda towards political reforms.

Situating the Two Centenary Goals

The book presents how the leadership of the CCP historically analyzed Chinese society, what are the current challenges they face, and what plans are to be undertaken for the "rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Adhering to the Marxist analysis on the historical development, the CCP contextualizes China's basic condition as being in the primary stage of socialism.³ The CCP

² The propaganda apparatus of China spans almost all aspects of Chinese life and maintains the "correct" and "acceptable" depiction of Chinese society in local and foreign media.

³ Defined as a particular historical stage in building Chinese socialism. It refers to the historic stage in which China has gradually come out of under-development and will have, by and large, realized socialist modernization. It will take at least 100 years to take shape from the completion of the socialist transformation of the private ownership of the means of production in the 1950s to the completion of socialist modernization (*Governance of China*, 2014).

would point out that considering China's recent development and breakthroughs, it is still the largest developing country with a great majority of its population under the poverty threshold under United Nations standards.

Major studies about China that lean towards the idea of "China as a threat" would always fall short of creating the context about its development status in the realms of its economy, society, and governance (Shambaugh 2013).⁴ Context for Chinese officials is one of the key ideas they would cite to assess measures for China's growth as epitomized in their branding of developmental models with "Chinese characteristics" adhering to the conditions of China.

The CCP would always state that "there is no such thing in the world as a development model that can be applied universally, nor a development path carved in stone."⁵ This would promote their belief against the prevailing "consensus"⁶ that is hinged in the western model of liberal development. Some would argue that the Chinese adhered to the same model as the West,⁷ yet, the text does not discount the practices it has promoted when they change

⁴ Shambaugh criticizes the "Realist" school's analysis on China's rise as being limited in scope as it focuses almost exclusively on the security and military variable which neglect the economic and cultural variables.

⁵ Mentioned in "Carrying on the Enduring Spirit of Mao Zedong Thought" (*Governance of China*, 2014), emphasizing the indigenization of Marxism and Leninist Thought to the Chinese context was one of the hallmarks of Maoist Thought; that in the societal analysis of the CCP, it is apt to adjust the developmental model to the prevailing conditions of China, hence labeling such application as having "Chinese characteristics."

⁶ The discussion of the tenets of the Washington Consensus as well as the application in the Chinese context can be seen in Rodrik (2007).

⁷ The developmental model utilized by China adhered to the same western model as argued in Kennedy 2010, 461-477).

the role of the market from having a “basic” role⁸ to having a ‘decisive role’ reminiscent of western neoliberal regimes.

With the achievements that the CCP has engineered under the Reform and Opening Up period, the leadership calls on the further entrenchment of this process and that it is ‘ongoing and will never end’ (“Reform,” *Governance of China*, 2014). The Party recognizes the inequality that this period created yet remarks on the fundamental role it has on Chinese development. The logic of the CCP is that ‘problems stemming from reform and opening up can only be solved through reform and opening up’ (“Reform;” “Reform...Always,” *Governance of China*, 2014). In Deng’s rhetoric, “letting some get rich first” epitomizing the Reform and Opening Up, encourages the creation of the inequality which is now prevalent in the country and in the current leadership’s publicity it remains as the major driving force for development. It could seem paradoxical in relying on the mechanism that created inequality in addressing the problem of inequality. Again, this in the context of a land that runs on the power of rhetoric and believes in socialist doctrines that espouses Western capitalistic models of liberalization,⁹ deregulation (“Invisible Hand,” *Governance of China*, 2014), marketization and privatization under the banner of Socialism with Chinese characteristics.

With the international community focusing more on China, the central leadership gives the captivated audience an account

⁸ Reminiscent of neoliberal doctrine. In the speech, “Explanatory Notes to the Decision of the CCP Central Committee on Some Major Issues” (*Governance of China*, 2014), it stresses that the main responsibility and role of the government is to maintain the stability of the macro economy, strengthen and improve public services, ensure fair competition, strengthen market oversight, maintain market order, promote sustainable development and common prosperity, and intervene in situations where market failure occurs.

⁹ It is one of the core ideas in “Open Wider to the Outside World” (*Governance of China*, 2014).

of what transformations have occurred and entices the readers for what is yet to come with the laying down of the two centenary goals in celebration of the Communist Party of China's and the People's Republic of China set for 2021 and 2049, respectively. That is why at this juncture, the Chinese leadership would emphasize necessity of the maintenance of stability in domestic and international affairs. Majority of the topics of the collection would reinforce internal stability rather than a collage to other nations of China's hallmarks of achievements.

One thing that is reiterated in the volume is that China has changed in stark contrast to its post revolution stages in the 1950s, Soviet-style industrialization in the 1960s, a great cultural upheaval in the 1970s. A great deal of emphasis is that modern China is the product of the transformations since the 1980s. Modern China owes its current status with the changes during this period and the ideas that had bloomed in this period ("Study," "Address," "Reform," *Governance of China*, 2014). Albeit the decades of transformation, ideology is still central to the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China (Zeng 2014, 612-635).¹⁰ Chinese socialism is highlighted as the only way to achieving modernization as it adheres to the specific context of a developing China. This hinges on the Four Cardinal Principles ("Study," *Governance of China*, 2014, Footnote)¹¹ and the reform and opening up policy, which is reshaped by the changes brought

¹⁰ Zeng's conclusion points to the contrast of China watchers placing emphasis to performance legitimacy and paid almost no attention to ideology which analysts within China still consider ideology to be crucial. Continuous efforts towards ideological adaptation indicate party leaders' increasing concerns about the CCP's declining ideological legitimacy at the transformation stage.

¹¹ The principles adhering to the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. It is also the foundation of the state, and the political cornerstone for the survival and development of the party and the state.

about by the reforms into the ideological sphere with the latest incorporation of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of the Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development (“Study,” *Governance of China*, 2014). The adapted usage of these principles provide continuity in the ideological narrative that corresponds to the economic, political, and social transformations embarked upon in the past decades. These contribute much to regime legitimacy as the leadership progress from Deng, Jiang, Hu, and now Xi. It gives a sense of continuity, trajectory as well as a shared endeavor which the current leadership emphasizes in the Chinese Dream (“Achieving,” Rejuvenation,” *Governance of China*, 2014) of rejuvenating the Chinese nation.

Instigating a New Revolution in China

Deng Xiaoping, in his time, called for a revolution within the Chinese nation through the Four Modernizations that focused on modernizing agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology (“Study,” *Governance of China*, 2014”). China intends to launch a new revolution to achieve the Chinese Dream. It is not necessarily in the lines of mass mobilizations but one that is similar with Deng’s as it involves a revolution towards an innovation-driven growth (“Transition,” *Governance of China*, 2014).

Xi Jinping recounts how Great Britain and the United States became the uncontested power in their time. He attributed the British and the American success to the emergence of the industrial revolution and the technological revolution that originated in their countries respectively in different periods in history. He plans to situate China as the country of origin for the next technological revolution and emphasized that scientific and technological innovation is pivotal to improving social productivity and the comprehensive national strength.

In recent years, China has proven its capacity as a hub for new breakthroughs in various fields of sciences.¹² The Chinese leadership advocated this call to ‘mobilize’ the Chinese people to build an efficient and strong supply system of key generic technology¹³ as well as a call to work hard to make great breakthroughs in key technology and hold key technology.¹⁴ This next revolution emphasizes an independent innovation path to leap-frogging development in key sectors. This means that the cultivation of indigenous talents is emphasized yet it does not necessarily need to be only those situated in the country now.

A substantial support was lent in carrying out the ‘serve the country program’ which relies on the capacities of Chinese that have studied overseas to return and serve in the achieving the Chinese Dream (“Right Time,” *Governance of China*, 2014). These Western educated scholars act as the bridge between the Party and the overseas students as well as a united front under the leadership of the Party in the strengthened Western Returned Scholars Association and its additional name Chinese Overseas-educated Scholars Association to serve as a talent pool in the service of China, a think tank of ideas and proposals, and is vital to the people to people diplomacy advocated by the leadership.

In this light, a reevaluation of the statement ‘China cannot develop without the rest of the world; nor can the world as a whole prosper without China’ present China’s relationship as they selectively participate in the construction and use of the world’s major scientific applications, and research and development

¹² A short discussion of the shift towards China is seen in Yau (2002), 37-42.

¹³ A discussion of the transition of industrial structure of China over the past decades as well as the highlighting of key industries that were targeted and are being eyed for the future can be seen in Wang (2014).

¹⁴ An overview of China’s current industrial capacity and layout of the 12th Five-Year Plan’s emerging strategic industries for China; the same priorities can be seen in the highlights of the 13th Five-Year Plan (“Highlights of Proposals,” 2015).

bases and centers in achieving China's Dream ('Rejuvenation,' Governance of China, 2014). This points to the existing relationship it has with the developed world as the future it views in the 'revolution' to come.

China's View of the International

Whenever the "Chinese Dream" is mentioned, a narrative of the "century of humiliation" is always a starting point in discussing the dream.¹⁵ This "dream" is an effort to develop China into a moderately prosperous society in all respects (*Governance of China*, 2014)¹⁶ that would be realized as they achieve the two centenary goals. An emphasis was stated that the reason for the "century of humiliation" was that the backwardness left the Chinese vulnerable to attack, whereas only development would make China strong ("Rejuvenation," *Governance of China*, 2014) and to the military, what this meant is to make their forces strong by building a strong national defense and powerful military.¹⁷

¹⁵ "...Our nation has gone through untold tribulations and faced greater perils" (quoted in "The People's Wish," *Governance of China*, 2014). "...Its sufferings and sacrifices in modern times were rarely seen in the history of the world," and "Our struggle in the over 170 years since the Opium war..." (quoted in "Rejuvenation," *Governance of China*, 2014).

¹⁶ The main elements of the goal are healthy and sustainable economic development with both the GDP and per capita income for urban and rural residents doubling those of 2010; expand people's democracy, significantly improve cultural soft power; substantially improve people's living standards; and major progress in building a resource-conserving and environmentally friendly society.

¹⁷ "Achieving the great renewal of the Chinese nation has become the dream of the Chinese people in modern times. This great dream we have is to make our country strong. To the military, the dream is to make our forces strong. To achieve these aims we must strive both to enrich the country and build a strong national defense and powerful military" (quoted in "Build Strong National Defense," *Governance of China*, 2014).

Some would situate this as a rising hegemon, but they utilize an argument that they are restoring China's natural, rightful, and historical position as a great power after a century of humiliation (Miller 2015). In this light some argue that China is restoring the regional hierarchy and maximizes China's security by expanding influence and control over its neighborhoods (Zhao 2015, 961-962). In reaction or as to distill the fears of the world, the Chinese have signified that they prefer the term *fuxing*¹⁸ in contrast to what the West pertain as the "Rise of China." An invocation of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence"¹⁹ and an adoption of an independent foreign policy of peace in espousing that China will never seek hegemony or commit any act of expansion²⁰ and stating examples that looking back on world history would see that all that launched aggression or sought expansion by force all ended in failure ("Strengthen," *Governance of China*, 2014). China also reassures that it will not inflict its past suffering on any other nation.²¹

As seen in the efforts made by China in every aspect, what it is trying to achieve is perceived by the world that their "rise" would counter the ideals of "liberalism" as epitomized by the West and the United States, with the West criticizing China's single party authoritarian rule. Continuing from this perspective, others would

18 *Fuxing* is synonymous to rejuvenation or revival or to restore what has been lost. Look into the context of "Rejuvenation," *Governance of China* (2014).

19 Espoused by Zhou Enlai are the principles of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. Explanatory notes from "Carrying on the Enduring Spirit," *Governance of China* (2014).

20 A consideration of the reclamation activities of the Chinese government in the South China Sea would counter this pronouncement.

21 "China will never seek development at the expense of any other country's interest, nor will it shift its problems onto others" (quoted in "Strengthen," *Governance of China*, 2014); and "...Will never engage in colonialism or aggression" (quoted in "China's Commitment," *Governance of China*, 2014).

expect China in devising its own form of the Monroe Doctrine²² in the Asia Pacific region with itself performing a strong leadership role. Those ideas are reinforced as China calls for a “new model of major-country relations.”²³ It mentions the new environment that peace is preferred by all nations all over the world and that we cannot think of the old mentality beset in the previous decades under the guise of the Cold War (“Follow the Trend,” *Governance of China*, 2014).²⁴

An atmosphere of cooperation (“Build a New Model,” *Governance of China*, 2014)²⁵ should beset the new world order as espoused by Xi. A contrary view is that the existing hub and spokes set up in the Southeast Asian region would not permit this for a concert of powers between the US and China or any other members in addition would be reluctant in sharing powers particularly the small and medium powers.²⁶ In line with this proposal for sharing, a call to build four bridges of peace, growth, reform and progress of civilization that links the two strong forces of China and the EU (“Build a Bridge,” *Governance of China*, 2014).²⁷ Even with these strong pronouncements for a new model of major-country relations, China maintains that it would enforce the role of the United Nations as it sees the international organization pivotal in maintaining peace and order (“Work Together,” *Governance of China*, 2014). Some would see that China with its establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the promotion of the One Belt, One Road initiative as a rearrangement

²² As mentioned in the chapter entitled “Can China Rise Peacefully?” (Mearsheimer 2014).

²³ This is explicitly made into a subheading for some speeches signifying an emphasis for this idea.

²⁴ This pertains to China-Russia relations.

²⁵ This pertains to China-US relations.

²⁶ As mentioned by White (2013).

²⁷ This pertains to the China-EU relations.

of the world order, yet, some would argue that the capabilities of the AIIB are bloated by the media in terms of the amount it can finance, that the main actors for infrastructure investment for China is that policy banks remain the primary instrument for financing international infrastructure projects of China, and lastly the available funds that Chinese firms are willing to invest as well as the ability of recipient country to accept the project or in other words the size of the market (Kroeber 2015,3-4).²⁸ The one Belt, One Road represents paths towards mutual benefit which would bring economic integration among countries involved, promote development of their infrastructure and institutional innovation, create new economic and employment growth areas and enhance their capacity to achieve endogenous growth and to protect themselves against risks as espoused by China (“Promote the Silk Road,” *Governance of China*, 2014).²⁹

There are skeptics of China’s capacity to sell the notion of a ‘common destiny’ to the international community (Miller 2015).³⁰ Asian neighbor’s public opinions are far from convinced of China’s intentions yet some point that China’s rise is recognized as well as welcomed by Northeast Asian neighbors with ambivalent and sometimes less positive due to neighbor issues³¹ while Southeast Asian nations recognize the US as the global superpower while accepting China much more whole-heartedly than its northeast Asian neighbors (Chu 2015, 398-420).³²

What the Chinese Dream represents in totality is not a proposal for a nationalist cry but combination of a blend of socialist

²⁸ All these points are concluding points given.

²⁹ This is in the context of China-Arab States.

³⁰ An excerpt from a comment made by Zha Daojiong of Peking University, professor of International Political Economy.

³¹ Issues such as labor, ideology as mentioned in Chu (2015), 398-420.

³² Based on public opinion surveys with the conclusions as stated.

modernity and Chinese tradition which is an appeal to unity over difference, and the collective over the individual (Callahan 2015, 96). This new socialist/civilization dynamic integrates equality and hierarchy into a new form of statism, which is involved in a global competition of social models (“Strengthen,” *Governance of China*, 2014).³³ Or to put it another way, the Chinese Dream’s components have a single common enemy: liberalism, the West and the United States. This would represent the constant call of the Western world, particularly from the United States for the Reforms of China’s governance to incorporate China into the existing fold.

A Chinese saying mentioned in the volume explains China’s view into perspective: “A Single flower does not make spring, while one hundred flowers in blossom bring spring to the garden.” It was explained that if there were one kind of flower in the world, people would find it boring no matter how beautiful it was. Majority of criticisms stem from China’s habit of non-conformity to the norm but always an exception while the Chinese view the natural reality of things to be different and this would bring enrichment (“Exchanges,” *Governance of China*, 2014).

Reforms in the Governance for the CCP

Thought provoking as the subheading may seem, the leadership does not see a trend of regime change to a fully liberal democratic set up in the near future. Lessons learned from the fall of the

³³ Mentioned is that China would never seek development at the expense of any other country’s interests, nor will it shift its problems onto others as well as acquire a global vision that advances the development of China and the world.

USSR and former socialist states (Li, Sato, and Sicular 2013)³⁴ necessitates a strong political setting as well as the achievements in the realms of economics and politics in China are attributed to the ability of the Party to mobilize as well as decide on matters efficiently (Tong 2014).³⁵

What can be read from the volume is that they are continuing with what they have been practicing as they have stated, “We have already got in our hands a good blueprint” (“Follow A Good Blueprint,” *Governance of China*, 2014).³⁶ A hallmark of Chinese governance is that officials at the top level requires that they have served at the lower levels which gives them invaluable insights in governance from the bottom up (“Governing,” *Governance of China*, 2014). As China mentions as a significant idea that the leadership maintains close ties with the people (“The Mass Line,” *Governance of China*, 2014) would enforce the idea that China is maintaining a Marxist form of democracy that adheres to the

³⁴ A short discussion of what has happened to Post socialist states after transition point to a rise of inequality. But these findings are context dependent and are not stated to generalize the experiences of all post socialist states. This focus is on how Corporatist describe their argument in the ‘market transition debate’ as how politically advantaged groups, during economic transition, reorganize and enhance their vested interests through rent seeking, monopolistic business activities, and the mobilization of social networks. These experiences provide China lessons to consider and steps to avoid.

³⁵ In China’s recent experience in overcoming the negative impacts of the global economic crisis may have strengthened the belief that an able state and state sector are essential in sustaining a healthy growth. It is expected that the government will continue to play a vital role.

³⁶ The context of the speech is the promotion of the decisions made under the 18th CCP National Congress and remain committed to implementing the guidelines, principles and policies formulated since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of the three represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, and all the major strategic arrangements made by the Central Committee.

dictatorship of the people.³⁷ This would combat the criticism China has been getting against its non-democratic form of government, but in this case, it is a non-liberal form of democracy. A critical point was made that there is an existing problem, that of the ‘four forms of decadence’, namely of formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance.³⁸ These extravagances are perceived to be the root of corruption. Striking would be that even with the triumphs that the CCP boasts, it also acknowledges its pitfalls and necessary points for improvements that is absent in all other forms of governments. The Party recognizes that they have a problem of incompetence among their ranks, hence the call to change that condition (“Study,” *Governance of China*, 2014). Officials must set a good example. Extravagance and the usage of public funds for private parties of local officials must come to a halt (“Strictly Enforce,” *Governance of China*, 2014). A need to curb these extravagances are laid out. In any case, China does not see this issue as a point to stop the development and address the elephant in the room, democracy, nor as a prerequisite for development. It would be a possible agenda in the future, but the current leadership sees itself as having a different form of democratic practice, not in the image of a liberal democratic one, but one that adheres to its developmental needs.³⁹

In Consideration

The book is an essential reader for new scholars in the study of Chinese history, culture, and social system. It narrates the ‘story’ of China to the world (Shambaugh 2007, 25-58).⁴⁰

³⁷ This is mentioned in the Four Cardinal Principles.

³⁸ Further described in “The Mass Line” (*Governance of China*, 2014).

³⁹ Similar ideas are espoused by Peerenboom (2007).

⁴⁰ As one of the role of such state apparatus as the Foreign Languages Press is to “tell China’s story to the world.”

It is at this critical juncture that China studies are pushing scholars to push the boundaries as the Chinese people, under the leadership of the CCP, are creating new paths and trajectories for China scholars to follow. It is in this volume that the conventional thinking would not be able to address the transformations being embarked today by China, a new mindset is necessary to comprehend the Dream being espoused by China. And the CCP has envisioned rapid changes in Chinese society that would be 'all-around' the world and this volume would attempt to ready the world for that change.

Sifting through the veneer of propaganda rhetoric, one would utilize this volume as a crash course of contemporary Chinese modernization that is still in progress. One would get the sense of more things to come as the two Centenary Goals are fast approaching. As China onlookers, we must understand these changes from the angle of the dreamers as well as those looking for the same dream, this is from the perspective that this dream would not produce losers in the end or a possibility that the dream would never end for those participating in this shared-dream. Yet as realists would point out, China needs to wake up from that dream as history has told us, it is inevitable to escape the Thucydides trap. China would always respond, that is based on Western history.

An important thing to note in the utilization of the speeches in this paper is that the context of each speech used is taken into consideration but the limitation would be that the concrete context of where, what was the environment where the speech was constructed, as well as what is the composition of the audience. These factors, when not considered, would diminish the true meaning of the speech and would possibly distort the usage of the speeches. Yet as how I have mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, understanding the Propaganda apparatus of the CCP would enable us to utilize these speeches as a 'story of China's social system, history and culture' that would permit us to retell the same story.

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