The Secret to China's Rise—A Question of Leadership

by Jeffrey Steinberg and William Jones

Feb. 29—In a United States now become a post-industrial rust-bucket, the entire list of current "major" presidential candidates is characterized more by the candidates' overriding ambition rather than their political—and moral—qualifications to lead a country. At the same time, the world has been amazed by the tremendous growth of the Chinese economy and by the unprecedented capability to bring 600 million people out of poverty between 1981 and 2004. What is the secret to this "Chinese miracle," and does it hold lessons for us, and perhaps an admonishment, as we go to elections with a lackluster group of mere politicians?

Deng Xiaoping with Mao Zedong in 1975. Mao died in 1976 and the Cultural Revolution died with him. Deng came to power in 1977.

The key to the mystery is the quality of leadership shown in recent times by the people who have been called upon to steer the ship of state in the People's Republic of China. We must begin by looking at the man who was single-handedly responsible for the "reform and opening up" which shifted China onto the track of rapid economic development, Deng Xiaoping.

Deng Xiaoping Takes the Reins

By the time Deng Xiaoping took control of the Communist Party of China (CPC), following the death of Mao Zedong and the arrests of the Gang of Four, China had gone through a period of 40 years of devastation. For China, the Second World War began in 1937, with the Japanese invasion. Over the next dozen years, China was in a state of continuous warfare—warfare against the Japanese through 1945, and then the civil war, which lasted until Chaing Kai-shek's forces were driven from the mainland in 1949.

At the end of World War II, the average life expectancy in China was 41 years. Over the course of the next three decades, between the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, China destroyed itself. The educational system, including the entire university system, was virtually shut down. China's most educated scientists, teachers, engineers, and medical professionals were shipped to the countryside for "re-education," a euphemism for slave labor and mental torture, or had been killed in the hysterical purges by the Red Guards.

Deng Xiaoping, a hero of the Chinese Revolution, was purged from power three times. He suffered personal tragedy during the Cultural Revolution, when his son was denied medical care and wound up paralyzed for life.

He persevered, and when he was returned to "active party work" following Mao's death, he knew exactly what he had to do to rebuild China to its former greatness—and beyond. For Deng Xiaoping, the key to China's future was to launch a scientific revolution. He told close friends and party colleagues that he intended to devote almost all of his time to reviving China's scien-

Zhou Enlai "had always served as a beacon of hope during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution." Here, Zhou (center) with Saifuddin Azizi, the first chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (right), in 1965. Zhou died a few months before Mao in 1976.

tific and educational systems. If he succeeded, he observed confidently, China would re-emerge as a great nation within 30 years.

The stage had been set by Zhou Enlai. While Zhou had always served as a beacon of hope during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution, he died a few months before the death of Mao in 1976. In 1975, Zhou had formulated the policy of the "four modernizations" as a program for bringing China out of the devastation wreaked by Mao's early policies. The four modernizations were the modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defense. It was these "modernizations" that Deng would have to accomplish, focussing in particular on science and technology as a driver of the other three.

Today, as the result of Deng's courageous and bold path, China has emerged as the leading scientific nation on Earth, on the verge of major achievements in space exploration and exploitation (in the best sense of the term). Some of the greatest scientific and technological discoveries and innovations have come out of China in recent years, as Deng's science-driver principle has impelled China forward, as the United States, once the greatest scientific nation on Earth, continues on a path of self-destruction, under the treasonous mis-leadership of the past two presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Mao's Death and Deng's Revolution

With the death of Mao Zedong on September 6, 1976 and the arrests the following month of the "Gang of Four," Deng Xiaoping rapidly established himself as China's new "supreme leader." Despite the fact that the only formal top position he would hold was as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, it was Deng's vision of a modern China that was the single most significant factor in the revolutionary changes that China underwent in the next 40 years.

According to Deng biographer Ezra Vogel, from the moment he returned to power, Deng Xiaoping prioritized the development of a scientific and technological cadre over all other responsibilities and initiatives. He emphasized to colleagues that if China were able to train a generation of world-class scientists and engineers, then within 30 years, China would be able to emerge as a leading nation.

In pursuit of this enormous goal, Deng completed the normalization of relations with the United States that had begun with the 1972 Kissinger-Nixon diplomatic opening. On January 1, 1979, the United States officially recognized the People's Republic of China as the one China.

Deng knew the magnitude of the challenge that China was facing in this regard. Following the start of the Cultural Revolution, nearly an entire generation of young people were deprived of any higher education.

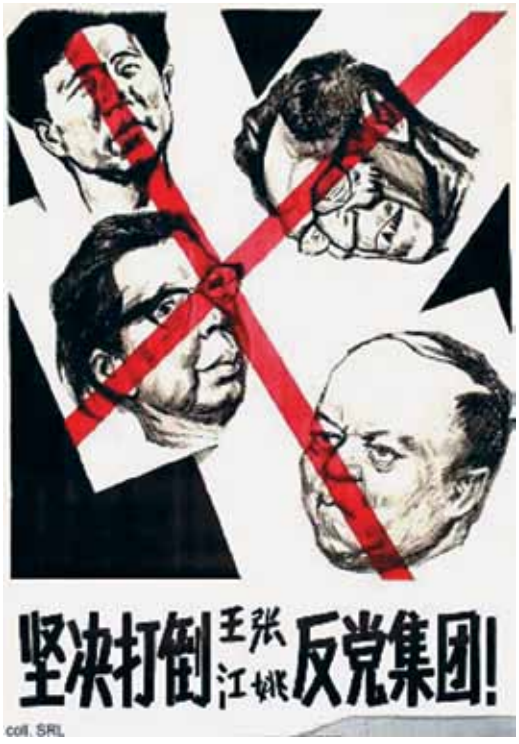
The campaign of the Gang of Four against "bourgeois intellectuals" led to restrictions on students not from a worker or peasant background and the loss of a good portion of the teaching cadres, many of whom of "bourgeois background" were sent to the country to perform manual work and be "re-educated." Chairman Mao called for shorter study times, and demanded that the students who finished their course work return to work in the factories or on the collective farms. Although there were still some universities in operation during that period, the level was far below what it had been or would later become.

This was the situation for almost ten years. Then in 1977, when the first of the Deng Xiaoping reforms were

taking root, many universities were reopened, and for the first time since 1965, students were allowed to take college entrance examinations. This first group of college entrants in over a decade, dubbed the "Class of 1977" (of which China's current Premier, Li Keqiang was one), became the basis for China's remarkable development since that time.

Already in 1975, Deng Xiaoping had begun to revive the China Academy of Sciences, bringing back many of the teaching cadres who had been sent to the countryside, many of whose members had died during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution.

The Chinese Government was prepared to temporarily accede to China becoming a low-wage producer as a prerequisite to its entry into the international system, but it also had a long-term strategy. It would agree to what were disadvantageous terms, but would forge the means by which it could work its way out of those conditions as quickly as possible, targeting key areas of science and technology in which it intended to "leapfrog to a higher stage of development."



People's Republic of China

Deng came to power after the arrests of the Gang of Four, consisting of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and her associates, who campaigned against "bourgeois intellectuals." Deng immediately prioritized the development of a scientific and technological cadre over all other responsibilities and initiatives. Here, a poster denouncing the Four.

Taking a page from the U.S. SDI program, China in 1986 developed its own "863 program for research and development." It chose seven key scientific areas in which it would put its resources, with the intent of making major scientific and technological breakthroughs in them. These areas were space, lasers, energy, biotechnology, new materials, automation, and information technology (IT). In 2009 the "863 program" was funding 110 new programs, including in IT, manufacturing, materials, resources and environment, earth observation satellites, transportation, biology, energy, and agriculture.

The Chinese Government also took another page from the U.S. model and established a National Science Foundation similar to the one in the United States. In 1997 China upgraded its science research program with a new program, the "973 Basic Research Program." This program had the following objectives: (1) support multidisciplinary and fundamental research of relevance to national development; (2) promote frontline basic research; (3) support the cultivation of scientific talent capable of original research; and (4) Build high-quality interdisciplinary research centers.

Deng Xiaoping's 'Long March' of Science

Immediately upon being reinstated to all of his former party and government posts at the Third Plenum of the Tenth Party Congress on July 17, 1977, Deng made it clear that he intended to focus his priority attention on science, technology and education. He identified specific scientific programs—nuclear energy, computers, polymers, semi-conductors, astronautics, and lasers—as the first priorities.

At the time, China had 200,000 scientific and technological workers and the United States had 1.2 million. He sought every opportunity to meet with visiting Chinese-American scientists, including Lee Tsung-Dao, Yang Zhenning, and Samuel Ting—to discuss detailed plans. He insisted on placing top priority on building a nuclear accelerator to start training a generation of nuclear physicists and engineers. Although Deng had not attended university, his wife and three of his five children had all obtained degrees in physics from Beijing University.

Within a month of his return, Deng convened a Forum on Science and Education on Aug. 3, 1977 to begin the reorganization and expansion of all scientific institutions. He insisted that professional scientists be among the directors of all of the centers. He revived the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and founded a new Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS). He reinstated the State Science and Technology Committee and ordered the drafting of a new Seven-Year Science Plan. During March 18-31, 1978, Deng held a

conference on scientific and technological policy that inaugurated 108 new projects.

Deng Xiaoping insisted that Chinese scientists be provided with the necessary laboratory facilities, salaries, and resources to rapidly revive core work in the hard sciences. To accelerate the advancement of Chinese science, Deng sent many of the brightest Chinese students abroad to study in the best universities. He explicitly set out to reconstitute a meritocratic elite.

Deng had no direct knowledge of the American System, but he did study its application in Meiji Japan. Japan had learned the lessons of industrialization in the United States during the tour of the Iwakura Mission at the start of the Meiji period, 1871-1873. Here, the Iwakura Mission, led by Tomomi Iwakura (center), in London, 1870.

China's 'Iwakura Mission'

While Deng had, in his youth, spent time in France and in the Soviet Union, he had never been to the United States. He had no direct knowledge of the unique American System. He did, however, have a clear idea of that system, based on the mirror he saw in Meiji Japan, which he did study. He used that knowledge to explore the global opportunities for China's rapid recovery from nearly two centuries of foreign oppression, first at the hands of the British and other European colonial powers, and then at the hands of militarist Japan.

Deng knew that there was another Japan that offered some valuable lessons to be learned. While Japan had learned the lessons of industrialization in the United States during the tour of the Iwakura Mission at the start of the Meiji period, 1871-1873, Deng was intent on learning from the Japanese experience as well as from the countries of the West in charting a path for China to follow in order to become a major industrial power.

In 1975, Deng Xiaoping made a five-day visit to France, where he received an opportunity to see first hand the tremendous advances that had been made by Western European states. Between 1977 and 1980, as he was relaunching China's economy, Deng sent many delegations abroad to study the methods of economic growth, scientific advance, and education. After hearing back from some of the first of the delegations, Deng noted that "Recently our comrades had a look abroad. The more we see, the more we realize how backward we are."

In the spring of 1978, Deng had dispatched four study tours to Eastern Europe, Hong Kong, Japan, and Western Europe (normalization with the United States would not be finalized until 1979). The most important of the study tours was led by Gu Mu, a respected economist, who brought a twenty-person ministerial delegation to Western Europe.

The delegates were stunned at the openness they encountered. They came back with initial offers for more than $20 billion in foreign investment in China. By June 30, 1978, Gu Mu had completed a written report to the Politburo. On July 6, 1978, the State Council convened a Forum on the Principles to Guide the Four Modernizations. It was led off by Gu Mu's report on the findings of his and other travel missions. The Forum ran through Sept. 9, allowing the findings to be disseminated widely throughout the government and party structures.

The foundations for China's spectacular growth were set by these initial actions by Deng Xiaoping, establishing the priority of scientific progress and advances in technology, and drawing upon the most advanced discoveries in the world.

China Shifts Gears

While the next decades would see the unfolding of Deng's vision, which he himself could observe before

his death in 1997, the onset of the 2008 financial crisis created an entirely new situation which would again require wise and steady leadership.

With the onset of the 2008 financial blowout, it was clear that without a major reform of the entire system, a reform which the western financial elites were fighting tooth and nail, the tremendous export market for which China was producing would quickly disintegrate. There had to be a radical shift in order to prevent this crisis from leading to massive unemployment and social unrest in China itself. Fortunately, the onset of that period would find at the helm another leader, with the qualities of Deng Xiaoping, to steer China under the new conditions of world financial crisis, Xi Jinping.

Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhongxun, had indeed been a protégé of Mao Zedong and a friend and protégé of Zhou Enlai. He held key posts in the Chinese Government, initially responsible for the western Shaanxi province and the area of Xi'an, one of the major regions along the Old Silk Road to Xinjiang province. This is where young Xi Jinping spent much of his childhood. In 1959 Xi Zhongxun was appointed Vice Premier, the youngest person ever to hold that position. But then, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, he was purged in 1962. Xi Zhongxun spent the years of the Cultural Revolution working in a factory.

Young Jinping, unable to attend university, volunteered to serve in a small village in the north of China, performing all sorts of hard labor—carrying manure, hauling a coal cart, farming, and building dykes. Through his conscientious work and his dedication to the villagers, the young man won their trust and was elected village Party chief. Later he would serve in a variety of leading posts in Hebei, Fujian, Jiangsu, and Fujian provinces, and served as vice mayor of Shanghai before being transferred to Beijing for a more central posting.

With the demise of the Gang of Four in 1978, Xi Zhongxun was also called back to Beijing to help Deng Xiaoping reconstitute the social fabric of society after the devastation wrought by the Four. Even before the decision to initiate the "reform and opening up" as a nation-wide policy, Deng sent Xi Zhongxun to the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in the south of China, where he began the first experiment with economic liberalization. Largely due to the success of the Guangzhou experiment, Deng was able to initiate the reform on a national scale, leading to the rapid economic evolution of China as the world's foremost manufacturing center.

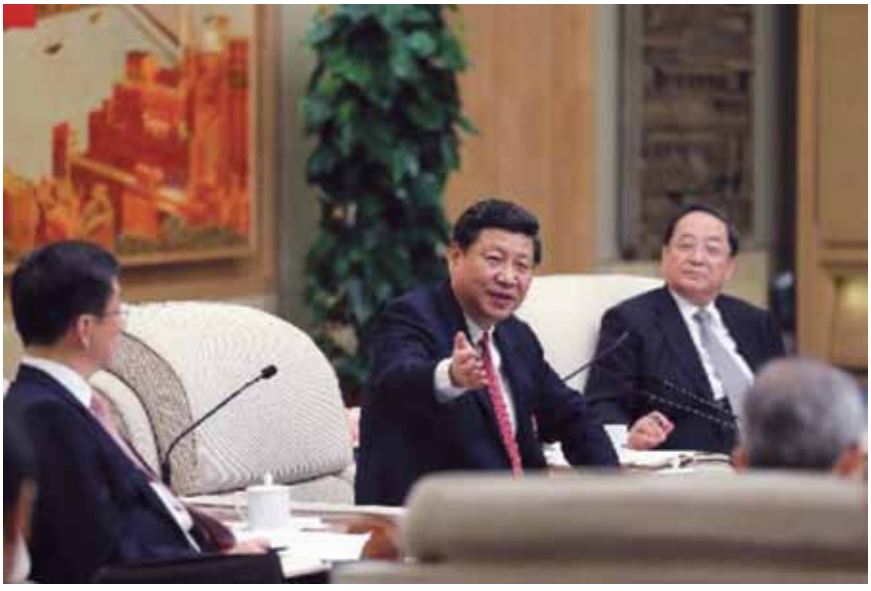
The record of Xi Zhongxun also clearly indicates the tremendous affection in which he was held by the people he served as chief of Guangdong. Pictures of young Xi Jinping standing next to his father on many of his visits and meetings indicate that these were perhaps the important "study visits" that have helped inform Xi's views on China and its problems, its capabilities, and its future prospects. It was no doubt symbolic in many ways that Xi Jinping's first visit as Chinese president was to Guangzhou in Guangdong Province, location of the first experiment in the "opening up" and the region where his father had made his reputation as a reformer.

Xi Zhongxun, President Xi's father, was a protégé of Mao Zedong and a friend and protégé of Zhou Enlai. In 1959 he was appointed Vice Premier. With the onset of the Cultural Revolution, he was purged in 1962 and spent the years of the Cultural Revolution working in a factory. Here he addresses the crowd at a mobilization meeting in Xi'an in June 1949.

The Dream of Chinese Rejuvenation

The publication by the Chinese Government's Foreign Languages Press of a compilation of President Xi's speeches from November 2012 to June 2014, under the English title, *The Governance of China*, while not a biography, provides a great deal of insight into the mind of the man and into his intentions as the leader of the most populous nation in the world. In a speech given at a press conference at the 18th National Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in November 2012, at which Xi Jinping formally took power, he gives an early introduction to his view of the path he felt China must take. "We are taking on this important responsibility for the nation," Xi said. He continued,

> Ours is a great nation. Throughout 5,000 years of development, the Chinese nation has made



Xinhua/Lan Hongguang

Xi Jinping formally took power at the 18th National Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in November 2012. Here, Xi participates in a panel discussion at the 18th National Congress.

> significant contributions to the progress of human civilization. Since the advent of modern times our nation has gone through untold tribulations and faced its greatest perils. Countless people with lofty ideals rose up for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, but each time they failed. After it was founded in 1921, the Communist Party of China rallied and led the Chinese people in making great sacrifices, forging ahead against all odds, and transforming poor and backward China into an increasingly prosperous and strong nation, thus opening completely new horizons for national rejuvenation. Our responsibility is to rally and lead the entire Party and the people of all China's ethnic groups in taking on this task and continuing to pursue the goal of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, so that China can stand firmer and stronger among the world's nations, and make new and greater contributions to mankind.

One year later, the Central Committee also presented the program of continued reform which had, after careful study and under the direct leadership of Xi Jinping, been decided upon as the direction China would now take. The new situation, or "new normal" as it was called, required a change of emphasis in policy. While the opening up of the Chinese markets would continue and there would be an increased reliance on "market mechanisms" to better allocate resources, there would also be a major revamping of the central government structure to make it more effective in giving direction to the Chinese economy.

"We should make good use of both the market, the 'invisible hand,' and the government, the 'visible hand,'" Xi told a study session of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) Politbureau in May 2014, "to promote sustained and sound social and economic development." The "reform and opening-up" has always carried with it certain risks as the financial interests in the London-New York financial world would love to access the resources of China to continue to feed the monster of their financial bubble.

In his speeches, President Xi has continually warned of the dangers existing in the present crisis-ridden financial system. "Although we have a generally positive analysis of China's economic and social development," Xi told non-Party members at a symposium held by the CPC Central Committee in November 2013, "we must not underestimate the risk and challenges facing us now and in the near future. We must be aware that the pace of world economic growth will continue to be slow, the problem between sluggish demand and over-production capacity continues to grow, and domestic companies are troubled by rising costs and weaknesses in their capacity to innovate."

Creating a Knowledge-Based Society

At the same time, the situation required major changes in the functioning of the Chinese economy, which had to radically transform its mode of production in order to respond to the changing world situation. "Unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable development remains a big problem," Xi said. He added,

> We are weak in scientific and technological innovation. The industrial structure is unbalanced and the growth mode remains inefficient. The development gap between urban and rural areas and between regions is still large, and so are income disparities. Social problems are mark-

edly on the rise. Some people still lead hard lives. Formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance are serious problems. Some sectors are prone to corruption and other types of misconduct, and the fight against corruption remains a serious challenge for us. To solve these problems, the key lies in continuing the reform.

One of the key elements of the "new normal" is to increase productivity in the Chinese economy through technological advances. These advances can only come through technical innovations, the result of human creativity. Hence Xi's continual emphasis on innovation and creating a "knowledge-based economy." "Our scientists and engineers should bravely shoulder their responsibilities, overtake others, and find the right direction, to which they should stick," Xi told engineers and scientists in June 2014 at a General Assembly of members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

"They should have the courage and confidence to blaze new trails, overcome difficulties, and seek excellence, and audaciously make world-leading scientific and technological achievements." Xi looked at the problem, as he is prone to do, from the longer historical point of view. "I have been wondering about the reason why our science and technology gradually lagged behind from the late Ming (1368-1644) and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Studies show that Qing Emperor Kangxi was very interested in Western science and technology," he said.

He then asked why this infusion of knowledge did not lead to a scientific renaissance in China. The problem, he said, was that, while the scholars learned a lot, "they did not apply what they had learned to social and economic development. Rather they simply talked about the knowledge." "To solve this problem," he said,

> we must further scientific and technological system reform. Change mindsets and remove institutional barriers hindering scientific and technological innovation, properly handle the relationship between government and market, and better integrate science and technology with social and economic development. We must open a channel through which science and technology can boost industrial, economic, and national development. We must spur innovation with reform, accelerate the construction and improvement of a national innovation system, and let the well water of innovation gush out fully.

Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722) "was very interested in Western science and technology," according to Xi, who then asked why this infusion of knowledge did not lead to a scientific renaissance in China.

Some of the results of this initiative can clearly be seen in the tremendous advances China has made over a short span of time in its space exploration program, including its manned space exploration. It is also represented by the recent breakthroughs made in the development of nuclear fusion by China. President Xi has visited the Chinese nuclear fusion reactor at the Chinese University of Science and Technology in Hebei at least twice.

In connection with this, President Xi has also stressed the need for education, especially in the sciences. In a speech to a group of outstanding students on May 4, 2013, the anniversary of the May uprising in 1919, Xi said,

> Young people must orient yourselves to modernization, the world, and the future, have a sense of

urgency in updating your knowledge, study with great eagerness, lay a good foundation of basic knowledge while updating knowledge promptly, assiduously study theories while enthusiastically developing skills, and constantly enhance your competence and capabilities to meet the development needs of our times and the requirements of our undertaking. Innovation is the soul driving a nation's progress and an inexhaustible source of a country's prosperity. It is also an essential part of the Chinese national character. This is what Confucius meant when he said, "If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation. Life never favors those who follow the beaten track and are satisfied with the status quo, and it never waits for the unambitious and those who sit idle and enjoy the fruits of others' work."

National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine

Xi told students in 2014, "Innovation is the soul driving a nation's progress and an inexhaustible source of a country's prosperity. It is also an essential part of the Chinese national character. This is what Confucius meant when he said, 'If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day.'" Students are at work here in the Max Planck Guest Laboratory, part of the Shanghai Institute of Cell Biology (CBI). The laboratory enables European scientists to work in China and stimulate contacts between Chinese and European scientists.

Lighting the Lamp of Wisdom

Xi often sprinkles his comments with sayings from Confucius, Mencius, and other ancient Chinese thinkers, which he has also incorporated into his own mental picture. He regards this tradition as representing the real greatness of China, which instils pride in the younger generation and provides the basis for that "dialogue of civilizations" which he has continually called for in his pursuit of helping his neighboring countries, both far and near, to achieve their own prosperity and greatness. Speaking to a study session of the CPC Politbureau, Xi said,

> During its 5,000-year history, the Chinese nation has created a brilliant and profound culture. We should disseminate the most fundamental Chinese culture in a popular way to attract more people to participate in it, matching modern culture and society. We should popularize our cultural spirit across countries as well as across time and space, with contemporary values and the eternal charm of Chinese culture.

And again in a speech at UNESCO headquarters on March 27, 2014:

> A single flower does not make spring, while one hundred flowers in full blossom bring spring to the garden. If there were only one kind of flower in the world, people would find it boring no matter how beautiful it was. Be it Chinese civilization or other civilizations in the world, they are all fruits of human progress.

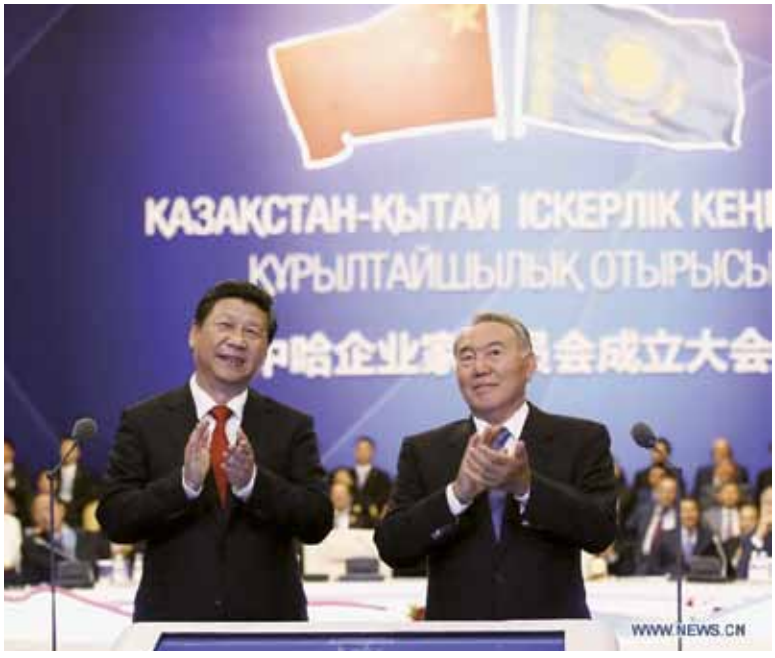
The Nature of the Opposition

This general philosophical approach is no better symbolized than by the dramatic proposal for constructing the "One Belt, One Road" or the New Silk Road. China's emergence over the last few decades as a major world power, breaking the post-Cold War monopoly of the United States' position as the chief arbiter of international disputes, has unsettled many countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. China is, of course, aware of the fact that it is the most powerful country in the region and that this has engendered some concerns among its less powerful neighbors, concerns that have been driven to fever pitch by the Obama Administration's reaction to China's rise by strengthening military commitments with its Cold

War allies and warning China that it remains a "player" in the region.

President Xi has been very clear that he understands the nature of these fears. Speaking to the Koerber Foundation in Berlin on March 28, 2014, Xi said:

> As China continues to grow, some people start to worry. Some take a dark view of China and assume that it will inevitably become a threat as it develops further. They even portray China as being the terrifying Mephisto who will someday suck the soul of the world. Such absurdity couldn't be more ridiculous, yet some people, regrettably, never tire of preaching it. This shows that prejudice is indeed hard to overcome. A review of human history shows that what keeps people apart are not mountains, rivers, or oceans, but lack of mutual understanding. As Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz once observed, only the sharing of our talents will light the lamp of wisdom.



Xinhua/Ju Peng

President Xi announced the New Silk Road initiative during a visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013. Xi and Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, are seen here in Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, during that visit.

The New Silk Road Grows

The "One Belt, One Road" policy, which had been put on the table in its first manifestation 20 years ago by Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche in collaboration with Chinese scholars—but had been kept in abeyance following the 1997 financial crisis—was resurrected by President Xi and made into the centerpiece of Chinese foreign policy. The policy aims at providing needed infrastructural investment to the surrounding countries and thereby transmitting some of the prosperity which China has achieved to the less well-off countries in the region and to the world.

While the initiative was originally focused on China's closest neighbors in Central Asia and in Southeast Asia, it has become—through the BRICS cooperation—a perspective that reaches far beyond the Asia-Pacific, to Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

During his own trip to the Middle East in February 2016, visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, President Xi also introduced the Belt and Road as the means for transforming the economic situation in those countries, in the region now devastated by war. He underlined the importance of developing cooperation on energy, building infrastructure (particularly high-speed rail), and focusing on advanced technologies—nuclear energy, space satellites and new energy. If the present tentative moves toward peace in Syria are to be effective, such a development program, a Marshall Plan for the Middle East, must be put into place. The Road and Belt Initiative could be the crux of such a plan.

But this New Silk Road, while emphasizing the connectivity of modern technology among the nations, also harks back to the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, where there was created an understanding between different nations and different cultures of their common interests. Speaking at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University in announcing the Silk Road Economic Belt in September 2013, President Xi underlined the broader cultural importance of this initiative:

> Throughout the millennia, the peoples of various countries along the ancient Silk Road have written a chapter of friendship that has been passed on to this very day. More than 2,000 years of exchanges demonstrate that on the basis of unity, mutual trust, equality, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and mutually beneficial cooperation, countries of different races, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds are fully capable of sharing peace and development. This is the valuable inspiration we have drawn from the ancient Silk Road.

The Promise and the Danger

Later in 2014, at the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)—an organization proposed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev with the goal of bringing the countries of Asia together in collaboration and consultation in the security realm—President Xi made a call to transform the organization into a forum for the overall security of Asia, moving away from the coalition-building in the region which had been the hallmark of the Cold War era, toward a policy of win-win cooperation. "Common security means respecting and ensuring the security of each and every country," Xi told the CICA members:

> Asia is a region of great diversity. The countries there differ in size, wealth, and strength. They vary in historical and cultural traditions as well as social systems, and have different security interests and aspirations. However, we are all part of the same Asian family. With our interests and security so closely intertwined, we will sink or swim together, and we are increasingly becoming a community of common destiny.

Security must be universal, Xi stressed. "We cannot have the security of just one or a few countries while leaving the rest insecure, in no way can we accept the so-called absolute security of one at the expense of the security of others."

President Xi's call will not be heeded as long as Obama is President and is intent on cementing a Cold War alliance policy aimed against China and Russia. The Belt and Road perspective entails a new paradigm of relations among nations, away from the geopolitics that is now rapidly leading to nuclear war.

While we don't see the quality of leadership in the West that has characterized China recently, we do hope that our future leaders will at least be smart enough to recognize that quality in others, and will be willing to work with the leaders of Russia, China, and India to overcome the present world crisis. Were that to occur, we could launch a new renaissance for mankind in which such leadership might be engendered as a matter of course in a population imbued with the spirit of achieving the common aims of mankind.