

Party Congress Highlights China's Emergence on the World Stage

by William Jones

Oct. 21—The Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), an event held every five years, is the focus of world attention at this critical moment in history. This year saw the election of new party leadership, except for the General Secretary and President of China, Xi Jinping, and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, both of whom have five more years in their ten-year terms. In the last few years, China has become the engine of the world economy, and the pace of its modernization has been absolutely breath-taking. But this has placed upon China a much larger responsibility that now transcends the mere economic arena, as important as that is—a responsibility of a more general strategic nature.

There were once politicians who claimed that world history is not made below the equator, meaning, in particular, that the course of history is made by the North or more succinctly by the “Western powers,” and not by the countries of the “developing” sector. The rise of China has given the lie to this assertion, and has opened the door to a greater say in the direction of the world not only by China, but also by the developing countries generally, with which China has always had a particularly close relationship. Some in the West fear such a development. Imbued with the remnants of Cold War thinking, some Western pundits see any change in power relationships globally as a threat to their interests, and they work to prevent it



Xinhua/Lan Hongguang

China President Xi Jinping, delivering a report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Oct. 18, 2017, in the Great Hall of the People.

from occurring.

This geopolitically driven fear has also been obvious in most of the U.S. media coverage of the CPC Congress, where all sorts of grotesque descriptions have been made about the Chinese President and his intentions. One gets the impression that the U.S. media wrote the articles about President Xi's speech at the party congress even before he gave it! They somehow seem to “know” exactly what they want to say, from some template that never really changes, regardless of what was actually uttered. Fortunately, Chinese foreign-language media are rapidly expanding and have not neglected their responsibilities. The flurry of interviews with Helga Zepp-LaRouche in *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, as well as with other friends of China in the West, in connection with the Congress, has helped to break through the information blockade the main-

stream media hoped to impose on the general public around this important event. Contrary to the descriptions given in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, for example, in the Chinese press there is intense debate over the issues. And Chinese netizens, and their debates and comments, are among the most prolific and argumentative in the world. Unlike their counterparts in the U.S. press, Chinese journalists and netizens are not working off some template.

In his opening speech on Oct. 18, China's President and the Communist Party's General Secretary, Xi Jinping, clearly indicated that the party and the country were now entering a completely new era, and that the CPC would have to take this into consideration as it moves forward towards its celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

President Xi divided the period ahead into two stages. The first stage will be the period between 2020 and 2035, when China will achieve its full modernization. Then, from 2035 to 2050, China will be transformed into a great modern socialist country that is "prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful." "In this state we will reach new heights," Xi said. "China's capacity for governance will be achieved. There will be prosperity for all and the Chinese people will be happier and safer. By that time, we will also have become an active member of the community of nations."

Achievements under Xi

In opening the Congress, President Xi outlined the advances made in the last five years, his first term as President. In this period, China capped the achievement of bringing 700 million people out of poverty since about 1980, "with the middle income group expanding." "Arts and culture are thriving," Xi said. "China's soft power and international influence have



Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of China.

increased considerably, and there have been advances in the central and western regions. Making development people-centered has paid off. We have been more purposeful in developing green technology, and we have revitalized the armed forces." Xi underlined the efforts China had made in developing major-country diplomacy, pointing as examples of this, to the development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the creation of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the G-20 Hangzhou meeting and the Asia Pacific Cooperation Forum (APEC) Leaders meeting. "We have made major contributions to global peace and development. The changes have been fundamental and profound. We have solved problems that had never been tackled, and these

changes will have far-reaching effects."

A New Era Begins

With the success of these policies, which have been recognized by most of the world, Xi indicated that China was now in a moment of transition. The Congress, he said, was meeting at a time of great importance and in a decisive moment as "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has entered a new stage. "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" is the name given the Chinese model of development since the beginning of the reform and opening up launched by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 after the Cultural Revolution.

In its development over the last 30 years, the ruling Communist Party has played the decisive role. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the CPC became more intensely focused on improving the livelihood of the Chinese people. While the openness to the West created the preconditions for this growth, it was the leading role of the CPC, Xi said, which provided a direction so that this "openness" would not lead to the type of chaos that had resulted in Russia and other countries that allowed the Western



Deputy Premier Deng Xiaoping, standing next to President Carter in 1979, while on a trip to the U.S.A.

“free market” to run roughshod over them.

One of the goals of President Xi at the present Party Congress was to imbue a renewed commitment to the people’s welfare in all the cadre of the Party. “Each Party member must breathe the same breath as the people,” Xi said. A major anti-corruption campaign has been ongoing to deal with any Party or government elements involved in corrupt activities. With nearly 90 million members, it’s not surprising that corruption has become a problem. While it was young and oppressed, the CPC attracted idealistic people who were ready to put their lives on the line. But as the Party assumed power and its members became powerful and wealthy, many others were allowed to join who were less imbued with high ideals than with a strong desire for a nice career. The new Party leadership greatly reflects the demands that President Xi has placed on the members of the Communist Party with regard to their high moral stature, their whole-hearted commitment to improve the conditions of life of the Chinese people, and their commitment to assume the responsibilities placed on them because of the new role that China must play as a world power.

In his work report, Xi underlined the fact that moving forward with this program would also encoun-

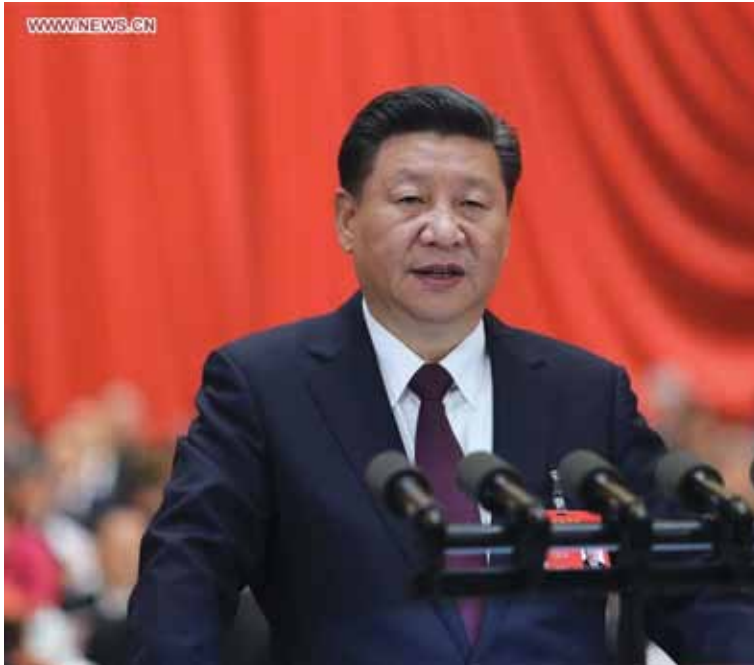
ter obstacles. “It will not be a walk in the park,” Xi told the delegates. “We have to address the inadequate and unbalanced development.” While economic growth has been the keynote of China’s development in the last few years, there are still many people living in poverty and there is a huge gap between the rich and the poor. The contradiction, Xi told the delegates, is between that inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing desire for a better life. Xi stressed that it was the Party’s commitment to the underlying ideals of socialism, of working for improving the people’s livelihood, that was the key to resolving this contradiction. But the commitment to the leading role of the Party was not in question. “We must recognize that this doesn’t change our view of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This has not changed, and we must base our work on

this reality. China’s socialism has entered into a new era of great importance for China and the world.”

The Question of Leadership

While outlining the critical importance of the Chinese Communist Party in the last century, as the only instrument then capable of overcoming “feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism,” Xi made very clear that China was not interested in adopting some foreign model to follow in its social and political development—a point which will no doubt infuriate many self-absorbed Western pundits. “We had to establish a social system that was suited to the Chinese reality and this has created the most profound transformation of the Chinese people. We have reversed the fate of the previous century. Our party has never forgotten its primary mission. We have overcome difficulties and created miracle upon miracle. And today we are closer to, and more confident in, making China’s rejuvenation a reality.”

As has been characteristic of President Xi’s vision since assuming power, there has also been a renewed emphasis on the longer arc of Chinese history and culture, and in his speech, he again placed great stress on the importance of the Chinese people and Chinese cul-



President Xi addresses the Congress.

ture over the last 5,000 years. “In that period, we have made remarkable contributions to mankind. It is the Great Dream of the Chinese people.”

And he clearly indicated that the goal of Chinese Rejuvenation, while led by the Communist Party, would be the work of the Chinese people as a whole. Xi underlined the need for developing a socialist democracy, which will entail even greater internal Party debate and discussion over the issues facing the nation and a greater engagement and participation by the other parties in China, which have, since the 1949 founding of the People’s Republic, always played an important consultative role in the country’s development. These parties as well as non-Party individuals continue to be welcome to participate in the task of rejuvenation, Xi said.

Changes would also be made in other fields such as strengthening the rule of law, Xi said, a point so often belabored by dishonest Western pundits who have not followed the dramatic developments that have occurred in this field in China during the last years. “We will also develop the broadest and most universal system to protect the rights of the people, and establish law-based governance in all fields. No organization or individual will be able to overstep the law.”

And, at the same time, being adequately equipped to

play a decisive role on the world stage, China will continue to work to establish that community of shared interest that President Xi has made a hallmark of China’s major-country diplomacy. “The world is facing many challenges, and no country can meet these challenges alone nor can it retreat into isolationism. More effort should be made in the call for cooperation in an inclusive world with a shared future. We must stick together through thick and thin.”

“Let us seek to learn from one another,” Xi continued, in concluding his speech on the work report. “China respects the right of all countries to seek their own path and it will never pursue development at the cost of others. China doesn’t threaten any country and we will find a convergence of interests with other countries. We will strengthen cooperation with other developing nations and we will promote cooperation with other nations through the Belt and Road Initiative.”

We must hope that the dramatic changes in China will be as infectious here in the United States as they have been in the developing world, where they have sparked new hope in the possibilities of rapid development. We know this paradigm, because once upon a time we also lived it. But we have forgotten the lessons of our own history, and our people have become rather petty and self-absorbed. Only by returning to our roots, to the greatness that we knew under Lincoln or Franklin Roosevelt, can we begin to recover our moral and thereby our industrial strength. If China can lift 700 million people out of poverty in a couple of decades, can we not eliminate poverty in Detroit or Los Angeles or New York? If we can learn to do that, we will see more clearly that China can become our partner rather than our competitor, in developing the world. It is devoutly to be wished that President Xi’s message of cooperation and inclusiveness also reverberates with President Trump, so that that lofty goal of a community of common destiny, which President Xi has so often referenced, can at last become a reality. In their upcoming meeting in November, President Trump has an unprecedented opportunity to take the outstretched hand of the Chinese leader and establish a bond that can put mankind permanently on the road to progress. Take his hand, Mr. President!