



## CPC AT 100: ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTLOOK

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*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*



The Communist Party of China (CPC) celebrated its centenary on July 1, 2021.<sup>1</sup> The celebration took place in the famous Tiananmen Square where Chairman Mao Zedong declared the foundation of People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949.<sup>2</sup> Since its inception in Shanghai in 1921, the CPC grew to be one of the world's most powerful political parties. The CPC has ruled over China since the founding of modern China in 1949. The party's most notable achievement is transforming China from one of the world's poorest countries to the second strongest economic power on the globe.

Under Mao's command, the party held to its key policy of "Socialist China" but the years that followed, the Chinese approach underwent a transformation. Policies that China was pursuing were revisited and a reforms process was initiated that led to a successful model, which for the very first time led to strategic engagement with the US. CPC pushed for a hybrid economic system in which there was an amalgamation of socialist principles with core elements of capitalism. Adopting this hybrid model worked wonders for China. This kind of practical approach was initially introduced by

1 "Chinese Communist Party Celebrates 100th Anniversary – in Pictures." *The Guardian*, July 1, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2021/jul/01/chinese-communist-party-celebrates-100th-anniversary-in-pictures>.

2 Shannon Tiezzi, "China Celebrates 100 Years of the CCP," *The Diplomat* – The Diplomat is a Current-affairs Magazine for the Asia-Pacific, with News and Analysis on Politics, Security, Business, Technology and Life Across the Region. Last modified July 6, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/china-celebrates-100-years-of-the-ccp/>.

the late Communist leader Deng Xiaoping in the 1970s who firmly supported the ideology of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics. In recent times, the CPC led by President Xi Jinping is trying to transform China into a global force therefore attempting to create an indisputable reality of a “New China.”

Under President Xi, China is asserting itself on the world stage unlike seen in recent decades. Beijing is facing a strategic competition from Washington, which would impact the contours of global politics and economy. President Xi’s speech at the centenary celebration attracted global attention in the context of this major power competition. At the eve of CPC’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Xi, while addressing a 70,000 audience, lauded the party’s achievements in the last 100 years and laid out his vision for the future.<sup>3</sup> President Xi highlighted CPC’s four successes, first in fighting the battles for revolution in China; second leading people of China to build a stronger China with spirit of self-reliance; third, party led China to pursue path of reform, opening up and socialist modernization; and fourth, party leads Chinese people to pursue great struggle and dream. These successes would lead to eventual ‘national rejuvenation’ of China. President Xi while recounting these successes signaled that Chinese people should focus on the goals of national rejuvenation and glory.<sup>4</sup>

Xi’s speech at CPC’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary gives an insight of his own future vision to make China world’s largest economy and strongest military in the future.<sup>5</sup> Looking at the future, while taking strength from past and present, President Xi underlined that China will not allow “sanctimonious preaching” or bullying from foreign forces, and anyone who tries “will find themselves on a collision course with a steel wall forged by 1.4 billion people.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, he said, “We have never bullied, oppressed, or subjugated the people of any other country, and we never will.”<sup>7</sup> These thoughts of President Xi were motivated by nationalism, sovereignty and strength and clearly showed his deep nationalistic orientation for China.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Annabelle Timsit, “Read Xi Jinping’s full speech from the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party,” QUARTZ, July 2, 2021

<https://qz.com/2028306/xi-jinping-speech-transcript-for-the-ccps-100th-anniversary/>

<sup>4</sup> Staff Writer. “Full Text of Xi Jinping’s Speech on the CCP’s 100th Anniversary,” *Nikkei Asia*, July 1, 2021. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Full-text-of-Xi-Jinping-s-speech-on-the-CCP-s-100th-anniversary>.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Ewelina U. Ochab, “Let China Sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world,” *Forbes*, January 13, 2021.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2021/01/13/let-china-sleep-for-when-she-wakes-she-will-shake-the-world/?sh=4439e44b6537>

<sup>6</sup> Reid Standish, “China in Eurasia,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. Last modified July 29, 2021. <https://www.rferl.org/China-In-Eurasia/2021/7/7>.

<sup>7</sup> Hussain “China’s Third Revolution,” *Dawn*.

<sup>8</sup> “Key Takeaways from Xi’s Speech at Communist Party Centennial Event.” Bloomberg, July 1, 2021

President Xi set forth his future ambition at a time when US-China relations are at a historic low and when the US President Biden has already been engaged in rebuilding partnerships and alliances across Asia-Pacific to curtail emerging Chinese influence at world stage. President Xi also crystalized China's position over aggressive US policies towards China that it is now a global power and any harm to its economic, strategic and territorial interests would be responded firmly.

Apart from conveying a direct and strong message to the US, President Xi's speech also highlighted how the Chinese Communist Party has achieved its first centenary goal of forming a moderately prosperous society and have set a record by lifting 800 million people out of poverty. Xi emphasized on how only the socialist system blended with Chinese characteristics has played and "is playing" a part to "Save China."<sup>9</sup> His speech was self-reflective as he gave many references of past failures as well as successes.

Another key takeaway from the speech was that China's development and prosperity will not only be confined to China rather "shared prosperity" is what it wants for the region and beyond.<sup>10</sup> He expressed that "we will promote high quality development of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through joint efforts" and expressed that by using China's experience and lessons of achievement new economic opportunities can be provided to the entire world.<sup>11</sup>

On Hong Kong and Macao, which have become the most burning and pressing issues in terms of National Security Law for China since last year President Xi articulated that "China will stay true to the letter and principle of One Country, Two Systems under which people of Hong Kong will administer Hong Kong, and the people of Macao will govern Macao, both with high degree of autonomy" however President Xi made it clear that central government will exercise overall jurisdiction on the two regions and will implement legal reforms and bring about enforcement mechanisms.<sup>12</sup>

President Xi's profound nationalist posture for China was also reflected on the Taiwan question on which he said that one-China principle will be upheld, complete reunification of China will be done,

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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2021-07-01/key-takeaways-from-xi-s-speech-at-communist-party-event-video>

<sup>9</sup> Helen Davidson, "Chinese Communist Party 100th anniversary: Xi Jinping vows China will never be bullied – as it happened," *The Guardia*, July 1, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Staff Writer. "Full text of Xi Jinping's speech on the CCP's 100th anniversary," *Nikkei Asia*, July 1, 2021. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Full-text-of-Xi-Jinping-s-speech-on-the-CCP-s-100th-anniversary>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

and any propaganda for the independence of Taiwan (Beijing's renegade region) will be completely turned down and crushed.<sup>13</sup>

President Xi's speech echoed an intense desire for modernization and global integration through a blend of new and old political strategies and architecture. China's growing ambition to take the center-stage in the great power game hints at a shift in China's worldview. China is witnessing very critical transitional changes at the moment where it has to grow and uphold its global presence. Technological development, China's international development strategies and its diplomacy will determine where China will stand in the next 100 years.

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<sup>13</sup> CK Tan, Staff Writer, "Xi's ambitions and concerns: 5 takeaways from centenary speech." Nikkei Asia, July 5, 2021.  
<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Xi-s-ambitions-and-concerns-5-takeaways-from-centenary-speech>