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XI JINPING: A DYNAMIC REFORMER AND VISIONARY LEADER

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ABSTRACT

Xi Jinping, the current President of China and General Secretary of the Communist Party, has emerged as a dynamic reformer and visionary leader, redefining China's socio-political and economic trajectory. His leadership reflects a blend of pragmatism and ideology, rooted in his early exposure to China's revolutionary politics and shaped by his academic and rural experiences. Since assuming power in 2012, Xi has spearheaded transformative domestic and foreign policies, elevating China's global stature while addressing internal challenges such as corruption, inequality, and economic modernization. Domestically, Xi's tenure has been marked by bold anti-corruption campaigns, poverty alleviation initiatives, and market-oriented economic reforms aimed at modernizing state-owned enterprises and addressing socio-economic disparities. His focus on creating a "moderately prosperous society" has aligned with efforts to enhance rural livelihoods, improve healthcare, and advance environmental sustainability. Xi's leadership style emphasizes centralized control and long-term strategic planning, often drawing criticism for curbing personal freedoms and dissent. On the global stage, Xi has positioned China as a leading power through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), fostering connectivity and trade across Asia, Africa, and Europe. His assertive foreign policy, including military modernization and involvement in the South China Sea disputes, underscores China's ambitions for regional dominance and global influence. Xi's leadership has also emphasized the "China Dream," advocating for a harmonious balance between socialism and modernization while projecting China as a model of governance distinct from Western liberal democracies. Despite significant achievements, Xi faces criticism for authoritarian practices, human rights concerns, and aggressive geopolitical strategies. Nonetheless, his leadership has undeniably transformed China into a key global player, shaping the country's future and its role in a multipolar world.

Keywords: Xi Jinping, Dynamic Reformer, Visionary Leader, China Dream, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Anti-Corruption Campaign, Authoritarianism, South China Sea Disputes

Introduction

Xi Jinping stands as undeniably the most powerful leader of a rapidly ascending China, casting an increasingly significant shadow over the global stage while skillfully

navigating an increasingly tumultuous world. As the guiding figure who represents a larger populace than any other leader across the globe today, he occupies a central and influential position that is vital not only in charting the future course of China but also in steering the direction that the world as a whole will profoundly take. Within the intricate and often challenging realm of internal politics in China, very few figures if any achieve a comparable level of influence that shapes the national narrative while also carefully curating their own public persona in a way that resonates with the people (Du, 2021). In the initial stages of his leadership, Xi confronted a series of formidable challenges marked specifically by economic slowdowns and increased governmental repression, creating a rather complex backdrop a reformist who simultaneously incorporates age-old traditional values while expressing unwavering loyalty to the nation of China, thus enhancing his public image. Through this carefully maneuvered persona, he has aimed to confront the long-standing challenge of governance in the vast country one that must balance the critical need for a modern perspective on citizenship and civil society against the enduring authoritative echoes of a deeply entrenched imperial history that still influence contemporary thought (Hess & Hua, 2022).

Building upon this distinctive profile, this essay meticulously unfolds over three distinct, yet interconnected sections that examine Xi's profound and multifaceted impact on China's polity, societal structures, and its pivotal position in international relations. The first part presents a detailed account of the economic resurgence that has unfolded under his vigilant watch, emphasizing the strategies and reforms implemented, while the second section delves into an in-depth analysis of his intricate political ideologies and ambitious social aspirations. Meanwhile, the third part delineates the ideological foundations that underpin his strategies in international relations, particularly in how China engages with other global powers. Xi's leadership intricately weaves through these three interconnected micronarratives, approached from a lens that embraces the dualities of his robust strengths alongside his inherent vulnerabilities that surface within the political arena. As both the President of China and the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Xi Jinping has captivated and commanded the attention of the global audience with his extraordinary ability to lead the world's most populous nation, which stands as the second most powerful worldwide, rivaling many established empires (Jinping, 2022).

His tenure has marked a significant turning point in history, showcasing China's remarkable ascendance by surpassing the United States in GDP, revitalizing global admiration for the kind of stability derived from authoritarian governance, and strategically engineering an expansive influence that extends throughout the Global South. Moreover, the manner in which China has adeptly navigated its role amid a historical pandemic has granted Beijing an unrivaled level of global influence, positioning it as a key player in international responses to crises. Despite these notable achievements and successes, criticisms of Xi's leadership abound domestically, as he occasionally finds himself at the very center of sharp critiques emerging from both the left and right sides of the economic spectrum within China, coupled with dissenting

voices advocating for political democratization, civil rights, and greater personal freedoms for the Chinese populace.

Early Life and Education

Xi Jinping was born in 1953 in Beijing, the capital city of China, which is known for its rich history and cultural significance. His father, Xi Zhongxun, was a prominent figure in the Chinese Communist Party and played a notable role as a revolutionary leader. He was also a close associate of China's first president, a relationship that would have a lasting impact on Xi Jinping's life and career. During a tumultuous political struggle in the 1960s, his father was imprisoned, which significantly affected the family's status and circumstances (Erling, 2021). However, following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Xi Zhongxun was rehabilitated and eventually returned to a position of influence within the party. Growing up amidst China's political elite, Xi Jinping was heavily exposed to the intricacies of politics and the mechanisms of power from a very early age. This environment undoubtedly shaped his worldview and ambitions. He first earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in chemical engineering from Tsinghua University, one of China's most prestigious universities. His educational journey did not stop there; he further enhanced his qualifications by earning a doctorate in law from the same esteemed institution, solidifying his academic background and preparation for a future in leadership (Xie et al.2021).

After the Shide incident in 1962, where Xi Jinping's father was falsely accused of anti-party activity, Xi was exiled to a remote rural area for a total of seven years, where he lived in a "dark valley" in Liangjiahe, Shaanxi. There he mingled with the poorest people at the "lowest common denominator" of society (Xia, 2022). This is where many of his core beliefs and his "learn from the people" dictum took root. This period of his life is reflected in his determination to ensure that everyone shares a piece of the pie now and his respect for tangible progress. The re-education of an abusive poll tax official, the process of land reform, and his trip to a gathering in Yan'an in 1968 all show how he has formed his current admission of being a "red-scarfed party member." The separation of the lifestyles of peasants, the role of politics in daily life, and the discrepancies in education of the "first-borns" compared to the "later-borns" would be his initial contact with Marxism as a thought system. His conversations with two mysterious wanderers who reject his hospitality for a simple porridge, implying the futility of an education that socializes a person and then discards them, would later come into play when he launched "cultural renaissance." His later squandering of a chance to study at Peking University and his early organizational work show that he had ingrained numerous lessons he learned while he lived in the "dark valley" into his way of thinking.

Entry into Politics

Xi Jinping began his political career as the secretary to the then defense minister, which was a significant step in his early professional life. During this time, he also served as the personal secretary to the chief military strategist, who held the position of Minister of Defense and commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army, an institution of great importance in the governance and security of China. In addition to these roles,

he is said to have functioned as a liaison officer, a critical position that linked a faction of the People's Liberation Army with the Chinese communists during the tumultuous Maoist wartime period (Corbett, 2022). This phase of Xi Jinping's career provided him with a broad insight into the political and military dynamics of the country. Xi Jinping did, in fact, subsequently ascend through the ranks of the political system in a manner that reflects a certain determination. However, his rise to the very top has hardly been an explosion of rapid success; instead, it has unfolded as a long, intricate, and laborious process that spans many years. This journey amply illustrates the complex nature of the party-political mechanism in China and the various pathways through which power is navigated within the Communist Party.

Indeed, it would be enough to mention that he directed both the agriculture and defense bureaus. At the party political level, the importance of these assignments is obvious. However, they were minor positions, which certainly did not eclipse the fact that Xi Jinping himself benefited from both recognition by the party and mentorship by leaders of the caliber of party secretary of Zhejiang and consequently president of the whole People's Republic of China. His initial standing within the province was consolidated following assignments to party positions in parts of the province located on the fertile and developed coast. Nevertheless, Xi Jinping showed his ability to govern when he returned to interior Zhejiang, where the bulk of the population suffers from low wages and low crop yields per square kilometer (Gascons Cuatrecasas, 2024). Indeed, the party leader stressed that the interior of Zhejiang is also part of Zhejiang's economic system. In other words, from his first positions in Zhejiang, and then in Fujian, Xi Jinping quickly acquired economic and political power that he actually would use in the interest of development.

Rise to Power

Xi Jinping's carefully choreographed ascent to the highest levels of power in China is a remarkable testament to his keen survival instincts and adept tactical maneuvering among his staff and allies. It is evident that his rise was not merely a stroke of luck but rather the culmination of intense and strategic backstage maneuverings, coupled with a meticulous use of anti-corruption investigations. These investigations were not just for cleaning up the image of the government but were cleverly employed as instruments to carry out bold political maneuvers that were instrumental in facilitating his ascension to power while also ensuring the integrity of strong, centralized leadership in the aftermath of any political transition.

Upon entering power in November 2012, Xi had already taken significant steps to secure the backing of essential stakeholders within the Communist Party, promising them greater influence and authority within the regime. This strategy effectively solidified his position while also allowing him to navigate the complex landscape of Chinese politics. Some of the significant achievements that Xi realized beginning in the 1990s have been implemented subsequently, thus enabling the consolidation of extensive authority firmly in the hands of the president (Goldstein, 2020). Nevertheless, as he embarked on various administrative and economic reforms with the aim of modernizing China's approach, Xi has encountered challenges in his efforts to reshape

the legislature to ensure that his current tenure is not only impactful but becomes the last of its kind thereby perpetuating a harmonious state of one-party rule through a policy-making approach that is somewhat less resilient. The balancing act he must perform continues to be both a challenge and a defining characteristic of his administration.

But Xi's political authority was fragile, depending immensely on his tackling of a range of political challenges. In the final analysis, he deposed Bo Xilai and had Zhou Yongkang and Xu Caihou imprisoned primarily by playing one princeling faction of the Shanghai retirement against another, i.e., a Zhejiang bulletproof Gang contingent formed by fellow Whampoa-linked old comrades who had met Xi during his term at the Central Party School, sitting at the head of business, with connections to and roles in policy making, and posing a moral and political appeal to Xi, the princeling, and his ideal of a Western moralistic corrupting urban elite (Xia, 2022). Alongside, Xi used his strong military connections to mend the broken bridge over the PLA, the disgruntled Xi's factional allies. Thus, his high-handed drive against the coterie of corrupt officials from the top rungs of military intelligence, national security, and law enforcement institutions would also target other individuals from business, local government, and the Party's central committee. His diktat hinted at the degree of alienation the managed cadre and other influential political will have borne over his stranglehold on the Party power.

Domestic Policy Initiatives

China's leaders have primarily concentrated their efforts on making significant domestic improvements that are designed to directly benefit the citizens of their country. The current leadership, headed by Xi Jinping, is deeply dedicated to enhancing national prosperity while simultaneously placing strong emphasis on resolving important internal problems and challenges. Several broad categories of domestic policy initiatives are essential in the context of China's governance (Khan et al.2024). All of these initiatives represent sincere efforts to ensure that China will continue to remain responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of its people. This comprehensive framework will provide a solid foundation of stability that will enable China to make many critical domestic and foreign policy choices over the coming decade. While the specific issues at hand can sometimes become quite numerous and complex, there are several broad categories under which virtually every significant issue can be grouped effectively.

The overwhelming emphasis of Xi's leadership has been to improve the condition and welfare of China's citizens. To a greater degree than at any time in the past, the leadership feels the pressures and the responsibility of representing the interests of China's citizens and taking steps to better their lives. There are fears and concerns that economic imperatives will drive the leadership to pressure other countries (Xia, 2022). To many foreign observers, the main question in China's domestic evolution is to what extent the leadership will be able to control or suppress the forces of economic change and modernization. We have already seen the determination of the Chinese leadership to control negative aspects of economic change, and we can expect to see ever

stronger efforts in the future. At the same time, we have also seen real progress in institutional changes, such as limits on the abuse of government power to control production and other aspects of the economy, and strong signs of willingness to subject the population to pressures that are essential if the standard of living is to be raised. The level of investment and continued expenditure that are necessary to sustain these efforts is an indicator of the importance that the elites place upon these policies in maintaining their control. The higher the commitment and the actual behavior, the more desirable it will be to maintain support for these leaders, despite some of their obvious failures. When we evaluate the foreign availability of various investment, aid, and trade proposals, these domestic priorities and pressures will be critical elements (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2022).

- **Anti-Corruption Campaign**

The first major campaign initiated by Xi Jinping was against the deeply entrenched problem of corruption, which had been rampant in China for numerous years. Xi himself characterized the situation as so severe that it posed a direct threat to the very existence and survival of the Party itself. Effectively managing and combating this corruption was deemed absolutely essential for ensuring the Party's continued dominance and control over the political landscape of China. It is alleged that high-ranking officials after high-ranking officials, including the trusted aides and right-hand men of some extremely senior officials, were guilty of engaging in widespread corruption and used their prestigious official positions to amass vast fortunes not just for themselves but also for their immediate families (Kautz, 2020). These officials indeed led exceptionally luxurious lifestyles, enjoying privileges that many could only dream of. However, the most damning accusations revealed that they systematically utilized their supreme positions to secure and guarantee that both they and their relatives could seize upon every lucrative business opportunity that presented itself. The proper and ethical way to accumulate this substantial wealth seemed lost to them, overshadowed by their greed and entitlement. Success led them to live unprotestingly in the rarefied atmosphere of what they believed was 'sufficient detachment' that their influential positions merited. The second matter that captured the attention of newly installed Xi Jinping was the excessive self-indulgence displayed by some high-ranking officials, whose lavish activities and extravagant lifestyles were unmistakably attracting the negative attention of the peasantry. This is not the kind of image that the Party wished to project to the masses (Falci, 2023).

In addition to his existing concerns, Xi was deeply troubled by the troubling spectacle presented by top state organizations that seemed to develop a troubling fondness for mutual back-scratching, creating a growing culture of complicity that fostered a disturbing level of operational inefficiency and an undesired degree of arrogance that should never have been witnessed in the highest echelons of Chinese society (Schiff, 2023). The evidence of this misconduct and its pernicious effects on governance were too glaring to ignore. Xi did not hesitate to employ the term "four undesirable practices" to accurately describe this troubling situation, which he viewed as a significant challenge to the integrity of his administration. Then, we presume, to

emphasize his grave concern for the matter at hand, Xi felt compelled to repeatedly voice his serious allegations against high officials who were guilty of these reprehensible practices. He took this decisive step despite the fact that he could have directed his powerful voice and impactful rhetoric towards addressing a much broader and more general audience, utilizing it to tackle issues that impacted many instead of focusing his formidable scrutiny on individuals within his inner circle.

- **Economic Reforms**

The new economic reforms that are currently being implemented over the longer term will not only continue to focus attentively on reforming state-owned enterprises and the finance sector, but will also, for the very first time, introduce a wide range of more market-oriented policies that will involve several key areas such as land and labor dynamics. Additionally, there will be the establishment of a greater number of modern social institutions that can effectively support these significant changes. Ultimately, the medium-term reforms will prioritize the issues mentioned above while also earnestly tackling some of the more recent and complex economic challenges that have emerged within the national context (Gao & Yuan, 2022). While the year 2030 signals the anticipated conclusion of what is expected to be a very successful first phase of economic reform for the country, it is absolutely crucial that China now progresses moving forward in order to effectively meet the emerging demands and challenges of its next ten-year economic agenda. This initiative aims not only to strengthen the economy but also to enhance the overall socio-economic environment to facilitate sustainable growth.

In early November, during the notable gathering known as the Third Plenary Session, a comprehensive and far-reaching blueprint was unveiled that has the specific objective of assisting China in effectively fulfilling the higher expectations and aspirations of its rapidly expanding new middle class (Goldstein, 2020). This emerging demographic is becoming increasingly assertive while also being far better informed, particularly regarding the prevalent and pressing environmental problems that are significantly affecting society at large. One of the truly unique and noteworthy features of the economic proposals that emerged from the influential Third Plenary Session is the Party's intriguing double entendre announcement concerning these vital economic reforms. Navigating the intricate complexities of the Chinese economy is further complicated by the realization that, in marked contrast to market economies where resources are typically allocated predominantly based on the price mechanism, a significant portion of crucial decision-making within the Chinese economic framework is, in principle, conducted by the authoritative Party and its elites. This dynamic creates a distinct and notable challenge for effective economic management and reform, underlining the unique and multifaceted nature of China's complex economic landscape, which continues to evolve and adapt amidst these changing times.

- **Poverty Alleviation Efforts**

In 2016, during an inspection tour of Qinghai Province, he stressed the importance of development, stating that economic development should be the top priority for us. He urged the local authorities to clearly articulate the vision of prioritizing production

development and enriching the people through development to guide the various forms of work. For producing regions and industries, he also made specific policy suggestions (Horowitz et al., 2020). The important role agriculture plays in guaranteeing a state's long-term stability was emphasized: We must work to ensure that herders and farmers are able to live prosperous and peaceful lives. We also see concern for the folk customs and traditional culture of ethnic minorities. Entering people's inner world, respecting their different nationality to the highest degree, and not imposing Han customs blindly have always been the basic characteristics of our nation, which we must stick to.

In 2013, he earnestly emphasized the profound importance of genuine poverty relief, stating firmly that achieving lasting prosperity for all of the people is the unwavering and unswerving objective of the Party. To this end, we cannot afford to shirk or evade our historical responsibility of delivering not only a nutritious diet but also sufficient clothing, proper housing, compulsory education that is accessible to everyone, guaranteed basic healthcare services, and access to safe, clean drinking water to the people who need it most (Jinping2022). In 2017, during a significant trip to Jiangxi, he expressed particular concern for areas suffering from extreme poverty, which included communities where people were living in poor conditions largely because of the lack of safe and reliable water sources. He commented that in the central region, particularly in the mountainous areas, there are numerous pressing issues, the foremost of which is the critical lack of clean drinking water in rural neighborhoods. He strongly exhorted local leaders to confront the truth directly, to look straight at the realities that exist, and not to evade or avoid it. This is the principled position we should take toward the masses of people in our society (Maître et al., 2021).

Foreign Policy and Global Influence

An analysis of President Xi Jinping's leadership indicates notable strategic changes in China since he assumed office in 2012. Xi's leadership has led to a more proactive approach in international trade, as China seeks to create an alternative system to the U.S.-centric model of globalization. His administration has also reinforced border control policies and strengthened narratives around 'national rejuvenation,' which are embodied in the ideas of the China Dream and the 'Confucian civilization state (Economy, 2022).' Additionally, Xi has embarked on unclear military modernization initiatives. The key principle highlighted during the Foreign Policy Work Conference advocates for maintaining China's vast external environment in light of new threats to its economic and security interests, while ensuring its developmental space remains uncompromised (Kania & Laskai, 2021). This reveals a comprehensive strategy that reflects a broader vision for China's role in both regional and global arenas. As a result, under Xi's leadership, China has shown increased confidence, asserting that deeper engagement with it through connections, markets, and partnerships is more vital for the economic and social welfare of its allies than adherence to alternative values or a liberal, rules-based international framework.

President Xi Jinping has significantly redefined China's global role and its principles of engagement. He has established connectivity, trade and information-sharing

partnerships, expanded educational and medical investments, humanitarian and UN peacekeeping commitments, and top-down engagements with the decision-makers of other states and international organizations around the globe in keeping with the claim of 'abandoning zero-sum thinking' for cooperative 'mutual benefit'. In sum, Xi recognizes that the United States is a power of the first order defining the indispensable systems architect (Khan et al.2024). Leading a broad range of leading, lagging, and non-aligned states committed to multilateralism as the principal mechanism for addressing global change even when its own conduct is an impediment is also a high priority 'strategic interest'. In a recent interview, President Xi underlined China's parallel commitments to both 'building a community with shared futures for mankind' and actively 'shaping a new world order spanned by the meso regions of Eurasia and Asia-Pacific', an ambition that coincided with 'peace shared with the local powers' and a 'commitment to warding off all external intervention'.

- **Belt and Road Initiative**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) stands as the most significant and ambitious project of the Xi Jinping era, which has been referred to on numerous occasions as China's "project of the century." Since its formal announcement in 2013, the BRI has become a defining element of China's strategic ambitions and extensive activities within its neighboring regions and also beyond those borders (Rana & Ji, 2020). The principal idea behind the initiative revolves around the vision of creating a more infrastructure-rich environment for Asia and its neighboring countries, with the ultimate goal of fostering greater connectivity, leading to a more prosperous and peaceful world. The initiative's broader language used in official statements articulates that the BRI aims at "promoting common development and enhancing people-to-people ties through improved connectivity and productive investment across the region and the globe." This connectivity not only focuses on physical infrastructure, such as railways and roads but also emphasizes deeper economic ties and cultural exchanges that can strengthen relationships among nations involved.

The BRI undoubtedly presents opportunities and challenges for the countries it involves, besides offering benefits to China by giving it the ability to direct surplus industrial production into more outward-looking investments, services, and infrastructure (Dunford, 2021). Reactivating the old Silk Road also contributes to building China's soft power across the world by emphasizing win-win cooperation and shared destinies. Strategically, it helps to narrow development differences between China's coastal areas and its more backward western regions. The investment areas in China are as marked as in other parts of the world. It was thus worthwhile from the authorities' perspective to deploy money on a simultaneously poverty-reducing and geopolitical frontier-building program to cool down various potential conflicts. If this strategy works, it may make a wave of migrants from North Africa or Kyrgyzstan back to Urumqi less likely. By directing infrastructural expenditure to China's border areas, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang, the BRI also reinforces the accelerated sinification of the interior of the region and provides a way around the Pacific option for blockaded Northeast Asia's trade with the Atlantic zone (Siddique and Shafqat2021).

- **South China Sea Dispute**

The South China Sea represents a critically pivotal aspect of Xi Jinping's multifaceted foreign policy, particularly in light of the tumultuous territorial and maritime disputes that continue to escalate in intensity. This highly strategic body of water holds significant implications for the intricate geopolitics of East Asia, where many of the involved nations have either long-established their presence or have actively staked a claim to various territories within its vast expanse. Each year, goods valued at approximately \$4.5 trillion transit through this critical region, a staggering figure that is roughly five times greater than the total trade volume passing through the Suez Canal and about three times that of the Panama Canal (Gong, 2020).

Moreover, a substantial portion of the essential energy supplies required by emerging superpowers, notably Japan, as well as numerous Southeast Asian nations, traverse this vital maritime route. In addition to its economic significance, the area is believed to be endowed with a wealth of resources, including trillions of cubic meters of untapped oil and gas reserves, further heightening the stakes involved. In response to these dynamics, Western countries, alongside regional players such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Australia, as well as the strategic city-state of Singapore, have demonstrated a robust and burgeoning interest in conducting naval operations, including the navigation of their warships and the deployment of fighter jets within this contested maritime landscape (Wang et al., 2023).

Besides, China has significantly aided the construction of artificial islands and various military infrastructure in the region, asserting that it is a legitimate right of a sovereign nation. Up until now, China has taken little public pronouncement regarding these developments, preferring instead to engage diplomatically with ASEAN, with the hope of resolving the issue through mutual agreement without resorting to theatrics for external audiences. For several years now, the South China Sea has been widely regarded as the "flashpoint" in the escalating geopolitical struggles that are rapidly taking shape across the Indo-Pacific (Anand & Forbes, 2021). The United States, being not only a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, possesses military bases located in Japan, Australia, and the Republic of South Korea. Furthermore, the U.S. has demonstrated a keen interest in increasing the frequency and scale of military drills in the South China Sea, which is perceived as a provocative action in the eyes of China. As a result, it is clear that this evolving situation presents a high-octane drama simmering just beneath the surface of the South China Sea, harboring potential for significant conflict (Vine et al., 2021).

- **Relations with the United States**

The relationship between China and the United States has evolved into a highly intricate and multifaceted interaction during the tenure of Xi Jinping, characterized by a delicate balance that encompasses both competition and cooperation across various sectors and areas of interest. China frames this bilateral relationship as one where "two major powers are engaged in constructive strategic cooperation," emphasizing the importance of collaboration amid the emergence of a complex and multipolar global landscape that necessitates joint efforts (Boylan et al.2021). On the other hand, the

United States has unequivocally classed China as a "strategic competitor," reflecting a more confrontational stance that recognizes the growing influence and assertiveness of China on the global stage. The Trump administration, in particular, marked a significant shift in the U.S. approach to China, moving away from a previous focus on Chinese exports and adopting a more stringent and confrontational stance on imports (Heath et al., 2021). This strategic pivot included characterizing China as an "economic predator" that undermines American economic interests. Furthermore, the Trump administration undertook substantial efforts to address serious concerns regarding Chinese espionage within the United States, resulting in the arrest of numerous foreign students, academics, and Chinese nationals. This wave of arrests was accompanied by the issuance of arrest warrants for various scholars and researchers believed to have ties to the Chinese military, as well as the dissemination of travel advisories aimed at protecting sensitive information and countering potential threats to national security. Owing to modern U.S. diplomacy in Asia, the Sino-U.S. relationship has taken on a strategic alignment and partnered with regional allies of the United States. Diplomatic relations have been conducted at a high level, including a visit to Beijing by a U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and a visit to Washington by a Chinese State Councilor. Jinping's rise to power has been fueled in part by his leadership over the country's policy toward the United States and the Trump presidency (Zhao, 2023). Owing to this, it can be said that the rising bilateral conflict was merely part of his own idea of paramount importance. Analysts admit legitimate threats, which contribute to the bilateral tension. It is argued that Sino-American cultural differences permeate the areas of economic theory and policy, foreign and defense policy, and security policy and are now primarily in the public eye. China assumes that U.S. human rights criticism is motivated by political considerations and by a desire to destabilize China, rather than considerations about the protection of human rights.

Xi Jinping Thought and Ideology

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era serves as the primary guiding ideology for the Communist Party of China, intricately woven with the distinct circumstances faced by Xi Jinping and his contemporaries. This ideological content encapsulates a complex integration of various expected residual commitments rooted in the rich history of the Chinese Revolution, alongside ongoing platforms and policies established by the Party, as well as new commitments that are particularly emphasized under the leadership of Xi Jinping. At its very core, as clearly indicated by its comprehensive designation, it serves as a grand vision for China, aiming for the modernization of socialism and striving toward the ultimate establishment of a "prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful" nation. This vision is intended to be realized under the leadership of the CPC, with a firm guidance of Marxism charting the course into the promising not-too-distant future.

Furthermore, Xi Jinping Thought also deeply encompasses the foundational aspects of Party leadership and governance. It promotes not just administrative effectiveness but also advocates for the development of new values and behaviors among the Chinese

populace. This includes an emphasis on adopting a suitably "positive" role on the international stage as China engages more fully with the world. It is a holistic approach aimed at harmonizing internal aspirations with external responsibilities, reflecting a nuanced understanding of global dynamics while ensuring that the Chinese Socialist ethos remains central to its international interactions.

Xi has five notable components of his doctrine, two of which are absolutely central. First, his ideas on the "new era" are about remaking China's population with a positive identity and shaping a martyr/victim narrative about the nation, but over and above this focal point, they are about the final stages of "modernization" from 2021 onward. Xi, in his formulations, is describing the qualitative "take-off" phase when Chinese society becomes "moderately prosperous," and attempts a leap into high-income status that from a historical perspective is potentially transformative. Second, the Chinese Dream is about "socialism" and a reformation of Party and societal values. At its core, it seeks to blend one-party governance with Chinese "cultural" values that define why authoritarianism does (and should) work in China, transcending simple instrumentalism (He & Tang, 2024). Thereafter, these three policies relate directly to the CCP governance structures and attend to some core problems especially corruption. More than that, in their form, these policies help narrate historical destinies in which all Chinese can see themselves as catching up or "getting rich." These provide a practical and idealized vision of how CCP values and Chinese Communist ideology are being and can be realized.

Leadership Style and Personal Characteristics

Leadership style and personal characteristics. At the very core of this distinctive leadership style is the commanding image consistently portrayed by Xi, who has established himself as a truly strong and decisively impactful leader. His strong emphasis on the urgent need for a more centralized control over both the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the government itself is aimed specifically at addressing pressing and complicated challenges, such as rampant corruption, while simultaneously ensuring essential social and political stability (Xia, 2022). This approach aligns neatly with his growing reputation for making tough, sometimes difficult decisions in the face of adversity. Some analysts have pointed out that the Chinese political system, in which Xi operates, is not particularly oriented toward open dialogue and discussion; rather, it is characterized by a structure of top-down decision-making processes where the Party leadership primarily focuses on the implementation of established policies. This perspective highlights that the leadership weighs in on how policies are executed rather than engaging in a collaborative role in determining the strategies and approaches from the outset. Xi's often-stereotyped portrayal as the 'big father' or 'helmsman' figure fits in elegantly with this view and underscores his undeniable ability to exert considerable authority and influence over all others within the system (Fu, 2021).

His communication style is equally distinctive and clearly sets him apart from his predecessors. Xi is often described as a strong public speaker, and his addresses have usually been chock-full of visions and often quotable statements, reflecting his ability

to present a mixture of political thought, traditional values, and potent charisma. For him, as done previously by many other Chinese leaders, combining maximum traditional propaganda elements will help render his address sophisticated, lively, and spirited (Stadnytskyi et al., 2021). This explains why Xi's speeches are a blend of new ideas and traditional value systems and political maxims that ultimately allude to the reflection of solidity in his performance and enormous experience, a blessing to his people and country. Accordingly, it helps establish him as a great leader. All of this, of course, is intended to project him as a strong and charismatic leader whose political ideas have left an indelible mark on the new chapter of the Chinese Communist Party and the trajectory of the Chinese nation.

Challenges and Criticisms

His leadership has had to navigate a multitude of challenges that have emerged both from internal dynamics within the country and from external pressures in the international arena. Domestically, China is currently grappling with a slowdown in economic growth, a situation that has led to a greater awareness and acknowledgment of rising inequality among its citizens. This economic backdrop has, in turn, fueled social unrest and prompted critical voices to speak out against the limitations imposed on personal freedoms. There have been numerous reports that highlight ongoing issues related to the detention of various legal professionals, vocal human rights advocates, and members of the ethnic Uighur community, raising serious concerns regarding the state of human rights in the nation. Since approximately the year 2018, there has been a noticeable decline in China's favorability on the global stage, particularly among Western nations (Grosse et al., 2021). This decline is largely attributed to domestic policies that increasingly restrict dissent and raise significant concerns about widespread human rights violations. The complexity of this situation is exacerbated by China's assertive and often aggressive actions toward countries like Australia, as well as its military maneuvers and geopolitical strategies in the sensitive regions of the East and South China Seas and Tibet. The interplay of these factors continues to influence both domestic perceptions and international relations significantly.

China is also criticized for conducting aggressive foreign policies, seen in changes to the electoral system in Hong Kong, its refusal to consider and discuss the origins of the pandemic, its tightening control on Chinese Big Tech, and its crackdown on the cryptocurrency industry. More and more individuals are questioning whether Xi's rising new China dream is realistic. Authorities have also indicated that they plan to downgrade GDP as an official performance marker. Xi, however, follows Mao's legacy of personal autocracy, rejection of passive dissident behavior, and a penchant for conspiratorial thinking (Hills2024). Even though Xi Jinping has not been short of challenges during his terms in office, he often emerges as a dynamic reformer and a visionary leader.

Legacy and Future Prospects

Xi Jinping leaves behind an increasingly centralized regime, one that is likely to exert a significant influence over the party and state dynamics of the people for a

considerable time. We present to our readers a comprehensive reflection that serves as a memory of the material summarizing the critical events and themes of the past decade. This summary retraces the profound desires and complex challenges characterizing the Xi era and the aspirations aimed at realizing them. Readers have the opportunity to revisit the essential arguments laid out in the report, assessing whether these arguments have retained their relevance in the present context (Tsang & Cheung, 2022). Additionally, in light of the future challenges and ongoing issues presented by the international system, alongside the growth prospects of emerging and underdeveloped countries, one must consider that these factors, in the interest of all, could significantly influence and impact us.

The impending potential for political and institutional transition within the framework of the People's Republic of China's forthcoming policy definitions has catalyzed renewed contestations among various contenders. Although Xi has transitioned from his roles as titular head and general secretary, he continues to attract significant attention from analysts and scholars. His accomplishments over the past decade are noteworthy, yet they also pose various challenges, a reality that becomes apparent through a comprehensive and critical examination of the recent past, coupled with future projections by experts in the field. The range of anticipated changes has been both extensive and pronounced. Some nations are embracing the emergence of a new China, while others harbor apprehensions regarding its trajectory (Düben, 2020). The dissemination of its model and ideological principles is evident. A pertinent question arises: will Xi's ideological framework continue to guide the nation in the post-Xi era? The discourse encompasses the anticipated economic transformation, the evolving status of China on the global stage, and the essential re-evaluation aimed at achieving autonomy across technological, environmental, and other critical domains. Xi is characterized as a dynamic reformer, yet the extent to which he and his era resonate with the populace remains uncertain. There is a collective hope that history will not repeat itself.

Conclusion

In assessing various dimensions of Xi Jinping's leadership and evaluating his reform strategies across multiple sectors of China's domestic economy, politics, and society, it is imperative to highlight several fundamental and seemingly self-evident observations that contribute to our overall understanding. Primarily, Xi Jinping's dual role as both a charismatic leader, deeply engaged with ideology and moral principles, and as a pragmatic economic and social reformer, uniquely positions him as a multifaceted individual whose impact stretches far and wide. His appeal is rooted in his rejection of strictly ideological and conservative frameworks, which some analysts label as ultra-conservative. Instead, he embraces dynamic reform across various areas, employing ideological narratives and symbols that not only bolster his governance but also enhance its appeal within diverse segments of Chinese society. Moreover, following this premise, his pronounced inclination to instigate and endorse meaningful change, while simultaneously employing mechanisms of hope to inspire the nation and fear to maintain order, characterizes him as a rational actor committed to

modernizing his country, his party, and his nation through an innovative revolutionary strategy implemented in contemporary times. These insights can illuminate the symbolic and ideological foundations that underpin his leadership, thus inviting further scrutiny into the intricate complexities surrounding Xi Jinping's governance and pivotal initiatives that shape the nation's trajectory. Finally, it is essential to underscore, in greater detail, the foundational logic of China's modern history, which reveals the crystallization of paradigms over time that prioritize mechanisms of change and reform at various evolutionary phases within Chinese society, economy, political structure, international standing, and cultural landscape. An appreciation of this intricate reality is crucial for evaluating Chinese policies, understanding their underlying motivations, and considering their far-reaching implications on the global stage.

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