

# ***Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (III) in a changing world***

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Exactly one year ago Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech in which he reflected on the exercise of power in the most populated country with the world's oldest continuous culture. The speech is the last of 92 articles included in his work *The Governance of China (III)*, whose previous volumes had already been published in recent years. This third volume assembles speeches and texts delivered between October 2017 and January 2020 preceding the global COVID-19. However, the ideas in the book are clearly valid today.



*Beijing, Tiananmen Square, China's political and symbolic core (I)*

A couple of clairvoyant insights call our attention from the start. On the one hand, at national level, Xi's goal of the rejuvenation of the Chinese people manifests itself in multiple ways, its most striking one being the unleashing of energies leading to the greatest economic growth in mankind's history. During 2020 such energies have not been subdued by the pandemic, on the contrary, they continue as strong as yesterday. Indeed, within a highly uncertain global economic outlook, China's economic growth is expected to exceed 7% in 2021. At the same time, reading the book we recognize that Xi Jinping had concluded, well before 2020, that the world faced and is facing changes unseen in a century.

China's rejuvenation, which contrasts with the sense of exhaustion and division of the main Western democracy, and the sense of rapid change in the international sphere, are phenomena right now unfolding before our eyes. Indeed, anyone who dispassionately observes the crisis in Washington's Capitol, with the vandalic action of a mass encouraged by the American president himself, against the backdrop of tens of millions of citizens who do not trust the mechanisms of their democracy, knows that we are witnessing a major change with remarkable potential echo in international politics. U.S. democracy, seen as a model in the West for two centuries, is cracking dramatically due to internal causes.

In the West, we are used to leaders declaring goals to be achieved during their tenure (sometimes patchwork), while statesmen who think deeply or with long-lasting approach are hardly recognized and seem to belong to the past. In such a context, it is completely novel to read a 650-pages corpus containing the ideas of a country's leader ruling a fifth of the world's population and contributing to multilateralism and to global interdependence like no other. On style and content, Xi's analysis is based on Marxism with Chinese characteristics with a clear language sometimes incorporating references to the country's philosophical tradition dating back 5,000 years, making it a unique flowing narrative. Also, in times requiring more international cooperation it is worth remembering that *The Governance of China III* helps readers of different continents to understand Xi's motivations and achievements directly, without intermediaries.

How does a leader of a country responsible for a third of the world's economic growth assess the course of the local and global economy? How does he evaluate the public policy mechanisms from the Government that has managed to lift nearly 900 million people out of poverty in the last forty years (more than 100 million in the last decade?) Which steps has China been taking to achieve the status of a moderately prosperous society in the future? How should we understand the titanic energy explaining China's use of as much cement in 3 years of the past decade as the United States throughout the 20th century? What are the structural forms of organization explaining the extraordinary combat and success against the coronavirus while most of mankind is overwhelmed by the virus? What are the fundamentals explaining the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative (or Silk Road, as it is also known in the West)? What is the exact meaning of a community with a shared destiny for mankind? The answers to these and other fundamental questions are found in the book.

Regarding foreign policy, the reader will find explanatory references to a series of initiatives led by Xi in international contexts and agreements as diverse as APEC, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the G20, and certainly in the Belt and Road Initiative.



*Beijing, Tiananmen Square, China's political and symbolic core (II)*

Centuries ago, some remarkable Western intellectuals studied China in search of wisdom and a model of government. Over time we have learned that each country has its peculiarities, and that, above all, it is not wise exercise to try to copy a foreign model without considering national circumstances. China has been following its own path and during the aegis of Xi Jinping it has been adjusting it according to present conditions.

Today the present is moving at an unusual speed. When the most powerful country appears structurally divided and with a confused voice, the world has a problem. When CNN's White House correspondent reports that the current president "is leaving America in a whirlwind of violence, disease, and death and more internally alienated than it has been in 150 years," as global citizens we must wake up and readjust our perspective. The ancient Greek and Chinese classics already warned us that time is flowing, thus we need resilience. This means that inspired by the classical thinkers we must remain curious and seek the truth from facts.

Following the structural guidelines outlined in *The Governance of China III*, the Communist Party of China (CPC), the largest and the world's most organized political organization concluded its fifth plenary session of the XIX Central Committee in October. To boost the country's growth, the Government resolved to further promote the roles of innovation, the real economy, a strong domestic market, the invigoration of rural areas, and green and sustainable development. And the proposals were adopted for the elaboration of the XIV Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (2021-2025) and the Long-Term Goals for 2035. Is there anything in these wide-ranging decisions (which includes a vision of China and the world by 2049) that can also inspire us within the framework of a shared destiny? Certainly, the answer is positive, and the answer is also an invitation to read the ideas and decision-making processes that have guided the CCP collected in the book.

When in one of the two most decisive countries there is a national vision translated into a modernization made in a period several times shorter than the time that took Western modernization in the 20th century, it is time to reflect on the importance of the governance of China and on the importance of continuous and deeper interaction. Very fresh examples such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed between Asia Pacific countries with Beijing at the helm, and the EU-China

investment agreement, both agreed in the last two months, demonstrate that the notion of a community with a shared destiny for mankind proposed by Xi Jinping is a timely path.

Practical synergies mean that China and the rest of countries have bigger chances of pursuing progress than would be expected if each country pursued development decoupled from other countries. This is the main message to the world emanating from the highly recommended reading of *The Governance of China III* at the beginning of 2021.

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