

WEEK 12, 2023

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

An employee wears protective clothing while disinfecting a theater inside a cinema in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on July 20, 2020.

HOW THE WEST
HELPED CHINA
SUPPRESS THE

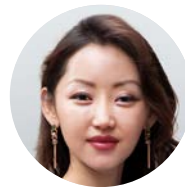
LAB LEAK THEORY

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OPINION

The People's Republic of Chains

YEONMI PARK



The following essay is an excerpt adapted from Yeonmi Park's new book, "While Time Remains: A North Korean Defector's Search for Freedom in America" (Threshold, Simon & Schuster).

The Chinese economic growth miracle of the past two decades is, without a doubt, one of the most impressive and consequential developments in modern international history. Nicknamed "the red dragon," contemporary China has become either the biggest or second-biggest power in global trade and commerce. It's at the forefront of science and technology. It's the global leader in payments, online retail, and infrastructure like high-speed rail, and will likely soon dominate consumer electronics. It also has a plausible chance of winning the race for predominance in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, which would certainly help buttress its skyrocketing military power. Chinese defense spending in 2021 totaled about \$240 billion, second only to the United States, and its active military force—more than 2 million—is the largest in history.

These are remarkable achievements for a country that refers to itself as a "unitary, single-party, socialist state"—a political and economic model that, outside of China, has an unbroken historical track record of failure, collapse, and defeat. And it isn't as if China doesn't share the same shortcomings as all the other communist regimes that have come and gone.

In 2020, of all countries in the world, China ranked 177th for "freedom of the press" by the nonprofit Reporters Without Borders, outranking only Turkmenistan, Eritrea, and North Korea. China also came in at No. 129 in the CATO Institute's 2020 Human Freedom Index, which measures 76 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom. Looking at qualitative indices of freedom, the only countries that cumulatively scored the same as or worse than China were Iran, Iraq, and North Korea (the "Axis of Evil") plus Cuba and Turkmenistan. Even when it came to business and financial freedom, China ranked 107th in an index put together by The Heritage Foundation.

China may be one of history's most intense drivers of economic development, but it comes at a higher cost than even economic growth can justify. As many countries in Africa, the Balkans, and Latin America have started to learn, the spread of Chinese power across the world means the spread of environmental damage and exploitation, abusive labor conditions, ruinous debt accumulation, poor infrastructure, and sex trafficking.

My mother and I had the misfortune of being inmates in the prison that is China when we were trafficked there from North Korea. I went to China because I was determined to find my sister, but also because I wanted the one thing that, by itself, could grant me a better life: a bowl of rice. In exchange for that pitifully modest luxury, I became a man's house worker and sex slave at the age of 13 and had to watch my own mother repeatedly pillaged by other men.

To this day, it makes me physically ill to think about it. But the older I get, the more the sickness I experience has to do with the knowledge that it's still happening—right now, at this very moment, as you read these words—to scores of other women and girls in China. What gives their captors the power and control they need to keep them enslaved is a single threat: "If you don't do what I tell you, I will report you to the police."

That threat is eminently credible. The Chinese authorities are notorious among North Korean defectors for their hair-trigger willingness to send North Koreans back "home," where everyone involved—the girls, their captors, the police—knows they will end up in hard labor camps until they die or else be



North Korean defector Yeonmi Park.

executed on the spot. This is a deliberate policy decision by the Chinese authorities. If they ended it, the human traffickers and their clients would immediately lose their ability to enslave North Korean women. But they won't. It's an important component of bilateral relations between Beijing and Pyongyang, and although the Kim regime can prove an irritant to the CCP now and again, China has shown no real signs of letting go of its client state.

The special relationship between the two communist regimes—the CCP and the Kim family—began during the Korean War, when China and Russia actively aided Kim Il Sung in order to "unify Korea" under the communist banner. Mao Zedong's son, in fact, was killed in action in 1950 during an American bombing raid. (Legend has it that despite a prohibition on cooking at night in order to avoid detection from the air, Mao stole eggs to make himself egg-fried rice on the night he died, alerting U.S. bombers to his unit's location and contributing to their deaths. Nowadays, every year on the anniversary of Mao's son's death, rebellious Chinese internet users post recipes for egg-fried rice in order to mock the government, which the authorities promptly remove.)

Accurate figures for Chinese aid and exports into North Korea are hard to come by, as the scale of North Korean dependence on its humongous neighbor is humiliating to anyone who actually thinks that the Kim regime has preserved any semblance of "self-reliance" or that the Juche is anything at this point beyond a practical joke. But estimates from the past decade show North Korea to be little more than a Chinese colony. Chinese aid in 2014 was about \$4 billion (North Korea's entire GDP was about \$28 billion in 2016). China seems to account for approximately 95 percent of all North Korea's imports, and China receives about two-thirds of North Korea's exports. Without China, in other words, the North Korean regime literally wouldn't exist.

In exchange for its support of the Kim family, China receives only small amounts of ores and mineral fuels. So, what's in it for Beijing? The fact is, the existence of North Korea is good for China. It serves as a geographic buffer between China and the U.S. military forces stationed in South Korea, and North Korea's nuclear weapons function as a reliable military deterrent to greater U.S., Korean, Japanese, and Australian action in the region. North Korea is also, according to some Chinese officials and academics—and this isn't a joke—an example of why communism is superior to capitalism and democracy.

Chinese influence and control, of course, extends far beyond its own neighborhood. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Tibet are only the crisis points within China's immediate sphere of influence, and countries like North Korea are little more than territorial extensions of the Chinese state. The majority of Chinese economic and political influence is being extended much farther afield, to the copper mines of Africa and Latin America, the land routes of Central Asia, and the energy fields of the Per-

sian Gulf. Vladimir Putin's ruinous war in Ukraine and the resulting sanctions on Russia's economic system have virtually ensured that the entire Russian Federation—the largest sovereign landmass in the world—will become a Chinese economic dependent.

It's concerning enough that so much of the Earth's surface and its population will be under the influence of a state dedicated to the overthrow of American power—what's more concerning still is the shape that new power will take. China may be one of history's most intense drivers of economic development, but it comes at a higher cost than even economic growth can justify. As many countries in Africa, the Balkans, and Latin America have started to learn, the spread of Chinese power across the world means the spread of environmental damage and exploitation, abusive labor conditions, ruinous debt accumulation, poor infrastructure, and sex trafficking. There's no doubt that, on net, the rise of Chinese hegemony represents a negative and threatening prospect for nearly every country in the world.

It's therefore incumbent on the world's only rival superpower, the United States of America, to stop it. Unfortunately, in recent years, America has become compromised.

In 2020 alone, a year in which much of global trade was disrupted and GDP fell precipitously, the United States still managed to be the largest importer of Chinese goods in the world, sending the CCP a whopping \$452 billion. The Chinese, moreover, have infiltrated U.S. business and finance at nearly all levels, acquiring U.S. companies, becoming the largest shareholders in many U.S. industries, buying up U.S. real estate, forcing the transfer of U.S. technology to China, and luring away the vast majority of U.S. manufacturing. In Chicago, where I live, the epidemic of high-rise luxury real estate construction—contributing to a city-wide housing shortage, price hikes, and a housing affordability crisis—has been driven in large part by Chinese investment.

The fact is, a large segment of America's elite classes and most productive industries have been purchased by the Chinese. Big Tech, Wall Street, Hollywood, and universities are all dependent on Chinese money and markets to keep their profits trending upward. Their behavior in the past two decades closely parallels Russia in the 1990s, when under Boris Yeltsin, a handful of oligarchs looted and sold off the country's resources to enrich themselves while ordinary Russian people were plunged into chaos and poverty.

The consequences of this were most visible during COVID-19, when nearly all U.S. corporations, universities, and media rushed to defend the actions and decision-making of the Chinese government, helping the CCP cover up the origins of the virus by deeming anyone who disagreed with the official Beijing line as a "racist" or "crackpot" or "conspiracy theorist." It also became painfully clear that U.S. industry had outsourced the most basic capabilities to China: The United States, the most technologically

advanced industrial country in history, couldn't even make its own masks or ventilators.

My mother and I had the misfortune of being inmates in the prison that is China when we were trafficked there from North Korea. I went to China because I was determined to find my sister, but also because I wanted the one thing that, by itself, could grant me a better life: a bowl of rice. In exchange for that pitifully modest luxury, I became a man's house worker and sex slave at the age of 13.

Across two presidential administrations now, the United States has vowed to do something about the Chinese threat: to bring more U.S. manufacturing and business back home; to bolster U.S. defense capabilities; to counter Chinese influence in the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East; and to stop the illegal Chinese practices of stealing trade secrets, forcing technology transfers, investing through shell companies, and integrating the use of slave labor into global supply chains. But both the Trump and Biden administrations have fallen far short. The fact is, America's China policy isn't even really made by the U.S. president anymore. It's made by the lobbying and interest groups and oligarchical classes that are dependent on the Chinese market, regardless of the effect on ordinary American workers and consumers.

The only hope for countering the spread of Chinese influence is the United States, but American elites are busy dismantling the sources of U.S. economic and military power to the benefit of the Chinese in order to enrich themselves. If this process continues, there will simply be no hope for preventing a Chinese-dominated future for the world. Having come from North Korea, it's difficult to convey how depressing this all is. The horror of North Korea is Exhibit A of what a more Chinese world would look like: more unspeakable crime, more abject human suffering, and more terrifying exploitation of innocent people for the benefit of a communist party cadre. Instead of ending the North Korean nightmare, Chinese hegemony promises only to spread the North Korean experience to more people around the world.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Yeonmi Park is a North Korean defector and activist whose family fled from North Korea to China in 2007 and settled in South Korea in 2009, before moving to the United States in 2014. She is the author of "In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl's Journey to Freedom" (with Maryanne Volz, 2015) and "While Time Remains: A North Korean Defector's Search for Freedom in America" (2023)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

US 'Will Continue to Focus' on China's Forced Organ Harvesting: State Department

EVA FU

WASHINGTON—China's state-sponsored forced organ harvesting continues to be a concern for the United States, a State Department official told reporters on March 20. The communist regime's systematic act of forcibly taking organs from prisoners of conscience for sale—which first came to light around 2006 after several whistleblowers came forward to The Epoch Times—has increasingly drawn attention in recent years. The European Parliament, as well as dozens of U.S. states and cities, have issued resolutions condemning the abuse, and federal lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have recently introduced legislation that seeks to hold perpetrators accountable.

Erin Barclay, the State Department's acting assistant secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, said she's aware of the congressional legislative proposal, and pointed to a section in the department's newly released human rights report highlighting the issue.

"We will continue to focus on that as an issue on a broad spectrum of human rights and trafficking issues going forward where it comes up," she said, in response to a question from The Epoch Times at a March press briefing accompanying the release of the report.

"The human rights situation in China is something that we are regularly raising with partner states bilaterally and in multilateral settings where China is present," Barclay said later in the briefing.

"China was violating the 'dead donor rule' that an organ donor must be formally declared dead before any organs are removed," the report states, citing a peer-reviewed research paper published in the American Journal of Transplantation in April 2022.

"The authors analyzed 2,838 papers from Chinese-language transplant publica-

The human rights situation in China is something that we are regularly raising with partner states bilaterally and in multilateral settings where China is present.

Erin Barclay, acting assistant secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor



[Chinese doctors] have procured organs from people who are not proclaimed dead, meaning they became the executioners.

Dr. Jacob Lavee, president, Israel Society of Transplantation



MIHUT SAVU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Falun Dafa practitioners carry banners to raise awareness about the persecution of fellow practitioners in China, during a march through the center of Warsaw, Poland, on Sept. 9, 2022.

tions and found in 71 cases that the cause of death was the organ transplant itself, carried out before doctors had made a legitimate determination of brain death."

The findings constitute an accidental admission from the Chinese doctors that they are engaging in forced organ harvesting, the research paper's co-author, Dr. Jacob Lavee, told The Epoch Times at the time. He is the president of the Israel Society of Transplantation.

"They have procured organs from people who are not proclaimed dead, meaning they became the executioners," he said.

According to findings from an independent tribunal, the principal victims of forced organ harvesting are practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual group that practices meditative exercises and follows the values of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.

Falun Gong has been the target of a brutal suppression campaign by the regime since 1999, with adherents experiencing forced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture, and slave labor. Millions of detained Falun Gong practitioners have thus become the nonconsenting victims

of the regime's forced organ harvesting.

Human rights defenders attempting to lend legal assistance to persecution victims also have faced increased retribution.

Chinese human rights lawyer Liang Xiaojun lost his license for defending Falun Gong practitioners, the State Department report notes.

Among the political prisoners identified in the human rights report was Falun Gong adherent Bian Lichao, a former middle school teacher from northern China's Hebei Province who was sentenced in 2012 to 13 years in prison. His wife, who didn't practice Falun Gong, was jailed for publicizing details of authorities' persecution of their family, and died in 2020 while in prison as a result of abdominal fluid buildup, according to Minghui.org, a U.S.-website that serves as a clearinghouse for the persecution cases.

Their daughter was sentenced to 3 1/2 years in prison after unfurling a banner that read "I want to see my father," Minghui reported. She was 23 at the time of her arrest in March 2014.

Emel Akan contributed to this report.



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Yemenis inspect the damage following overnight air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition targeting the Houthi rebel-held capital Sanaa, on Jan. 18, 2022.

OPINION

China Brokering Saudi-Iran Deal Sees Biden Losing the Middle East

ANTONIO GRACEFFO



The Chinese Communist Party's Middle East peace deal has implications for U.S. regional influence. On March 10th, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced that they would resume diplomatic relations in a deal brokered by China. Relations between the two countries have been broken since 2016 over a dispute regarding Riyadh's execution of a Shi'ite Muslim cleric. The final straw for their relationship was when the Saudi embassy in Tehran was stormed by protesters. Afterward, both countries recalled their diplomatic missions.

Tensions worsened when Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for a 2019 drone attack on its tankers in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia also accused Tehran of engaging in proxy warfare when Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi terrorists carried out cross-border missile and drone attacks in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, hitting Aramco facilities in Jeddah.

The CCP-brokered agreement is meant to reduce tensions and improve security in the Gulf region. However, before celebrating an end to hostilities, it is important to remember that the situation is complicated. One of the major players in the region is Israel, whose relationship with the United States, though strained, still defines much of the U.S. engagement with other Middle Eastern nations.

From an American perspective, the agreement is troubling as it is the latest step in the CCP's campaign to bring the Middle East into its political orbit.

The Abraham Accords signed between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, and witnessed by President Trump, went into effect on September 15, 2020. Last year, Israel signed a free-trade agreement with the UAE, the largest such agreement with an Arab nation. It had been hoped that Saudi Arabia would also join the Abraham Accords because this would have gone a long way toward ensuring peace in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have been at odds for decades. The Saudi-Iran power struggle left Saudi-allied countries dependent on U.S. military protection



Chinese leader Xi Jinping shakes hands with then-Saudi Arabian Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defense Mohammed bin Salman at the G-20 Summit in Hangzhou, China, on Sept. 4, 2016.

in exchange for remaining silent on the Palestinian issue. The deal brokered by China, assuming the peace holds, removes any real chance that Saudi Arabia would recognize Israel. It may even threaten the participation of the UAE in the Abraham Accords. If real peace is achieved where Houthis do not extend their attacks beyond the borders of Yemen, then this would undermine the need for U.S. military protection.

The Houthi, whose motto is "God is great, death to the US, death to Israel, curse the Jews, and victory for Islam," are a rebel group fighting against the recognized government of Yemen's President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. The government side is being supported by a Saudi-led coalition, including troops from the UAE, which is backed by the United States. This peace agreement could convince Iran to pressure the Houthis into retiring from the fight. This could mean that the Houthis would have to accept Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's government. Or, it could mean that the Saudi-led coalition would withdraw from Yemen and allow the opposition to take control. Until these questions are resolved, it is unknown whether this new agreement will bring peace.

From an American perspective, the agreement is troubling as it is the latest step in the CCP's campaign to bring the Middle East into its political orbit. The wording of the joint trilateral statement

by China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran sounds exactly like CCP rhetoric to have "respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs of states."

This verbiage has repeatedly been used in official Chinese foreign policy statements to deflect challenges to the annexation of Taiwan, the repression of democracy and freedoms in Hong Kong, or condemnation of the repression and genocide against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, as well as cultural genocide in Tibet and Inner Mongolia. The CCP's stance is that these are internal affairs and that outsiders should not meddle.

The CCP includes similar language in many of their international agreements such as BRICS and the Belt and Road. In a recent declaration by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), participating nations pledged "respect for other countries' sovereignty and non-interference in their domestic affairs." By co-opting a growing number of countries into signing documents forbidding intervention in another country's sovereignty, the CCP is preventing these nations from voting against China in the UN Security Council or United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Ever since the United States became largely oil-independent, China has displaced the United States as the world's greatest importer of oil. This makes China a larger economic partner for many Middle Eastern countries and strength-

ens Beijing's influence.

While the United States has less influence as a buyer, it still holds two advantages over China. The first is that oil is priced in U.S. dollars. Because all countries need oil, most countries hold the U.S. dollar as their reserve currency. For Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing nations, pricing and collecting oil sales in U.S. dollars eliminates currency exchange risk and prevents their central banks from having to go onto foreign currency markets to buy dollars. Many Middle Eastern countries including Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates also peg their currency to the dollar.

China has been trying for years to convince Saudi Arabia to settle at least some of their oil trade in yuan. After many years of discussions, however, Riyadh and Beijing have only agreed to possibly make a deal in the future. The truth is that Saudi Arabia has no use for yuan. The dollar will remain its reserve currency because most imported goods and raw materials must be paid for in dollars. The United States is also the primary weapons supplier for the Saudi military, and those weapons also have to be paid for in USD.

Being a weapons supplier is part of the United States' second advantage over China—the military. The United States maintains bases in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, which provide physical security to its regional partners. If the peace agreement holds, these countries may feel they no longer need U.S. protection, and may choose to be in Beijing's orbit. But this remains to be seen and is part of a far-off and hypothetical future. Even then, there would still be the issue of dollar dominance, an issue the CCP is powerless to resolve.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

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OPINION

Xi Jinping's Guiding Light

Xi's unswerving devotion to Marxism means trouble

STU CVRK



When Chinese leader Xi Jinping speaks, observers around the world listen for clues about what to expect from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the coming months and years. Sifting through the Xi-speak associated with the "Two Sessions" requires ignoring all the fluff and clichés that are routinely echoed by the state-run Chinese media, to get to the core concerns and issues that matter most to the communists.

The "Two Sessions" refers to the perfunctory annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the national committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). This year's sessions were the 14th in the dreary series. Perfunctory? Yes, indeed, as they are both rubber-stamping bodies deployed to show to Chinese citizens and the world that the Chinese communists practice "democracy with Chinese characteristics."

For example, on March 10, Xi was elected by the NPC for his third 5-year term as Chinese president, by a unanimous vote of 2,952 to 0. How's that for "democracy" when there is only one candidate? China's touted "whole people's democracy"—which delivers only CCP-approved officials—is just the latest Marxist euphemism for "democratic socialism."

The NPC impersonates a Western-style legislature. In reality, it rubber-stamps so-called "work reports" and policies developed by CCP apparatchiks and committees that were blessed by Xi and his totally controlled Politburo Standing Committee before the session. Nothing is presented that has not been vetted and approved by the CCP leadership; everything is accepted without debate. More "democracy with Chinese characteristics."

Meanwhile, the CPPCC is advertised as a national political advisory body. This particular session established ten special committees to "cover multiple areas such as proposals, the economy, agriculture, and social, legal, ethnic, religious and foreign affairs," according to the official website. Communists advising other communists: how is that working out? Apparently not very well, as the list of persistent problems below demonstrates.

Massive Structural Debt

Forbes reports that China's public and private debt now exceeds \$51.9 trillion, "almost three times the size of China's economy," and continues to grow. As reported by Zero Hedge, China has over \$7 trillion in so-called "hidden debt" that could lead to massive defaulting of public bonds: "Local government financing vehicles, or LGFVs, are mostly tasked with building infrastructure projects. They allow local authorities to raise money without having the debt appear on the government's balance sheet." A defaulting of LGFV bonds exacerbated by extremely high levels of household debt, would adversely affect the rest of China's credit market, which has already been stressed by Xi's failed zero-COVID policy. And debt servicing itself will also put a damper on

China's future economic growth.

Systemic Corruption

As noted here, corruption permeates Chinese life, driven by "the unfairness of incomes and a lack of opportunity," as well as a state system "that was designed to keep people in their place." The household registration or "hukou" system restricts movements and access to employment opportunities, benefits, and services. Greasing palms is one of the few ways to get around the system and improve one's condition in life. That communist bureaucrats are underpaid makes corruption inevitable, too, as permits and other authorizations are sold under the table.

Xi has railed against corruption since 2013 and has periodically announced anti-corruption campaigns, which always seem to peter out without any great success. Xi and the communists fail to understand that their inherent atheism and lack of moral foundation breed the corruption that they seek to eradicate.

Demographic Implosion

CNN reported in January that—for the first time since 1961—China's population "fell in 2022 to 1.411 billion, down some 850,000 people from the previous year" as announced by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The Chinese "economic miracle" will go up in smoke if this trend is not reversed, and frantic efforts to incentivize larger families by reversing the long-standing one-child policy reflect the communists' fretting. That is because the combination of declining birth and fertility rates and a decreasing number of Chinese marriages is creating an old-age dependency ratio problem. Social welfare costs paid to the elderly will be increasingly borne by a shrinking workforce, resulting in "old versus young" societal tensions surrounding benefits paid and the taxes required to pay for them—who receives how much and who pays.

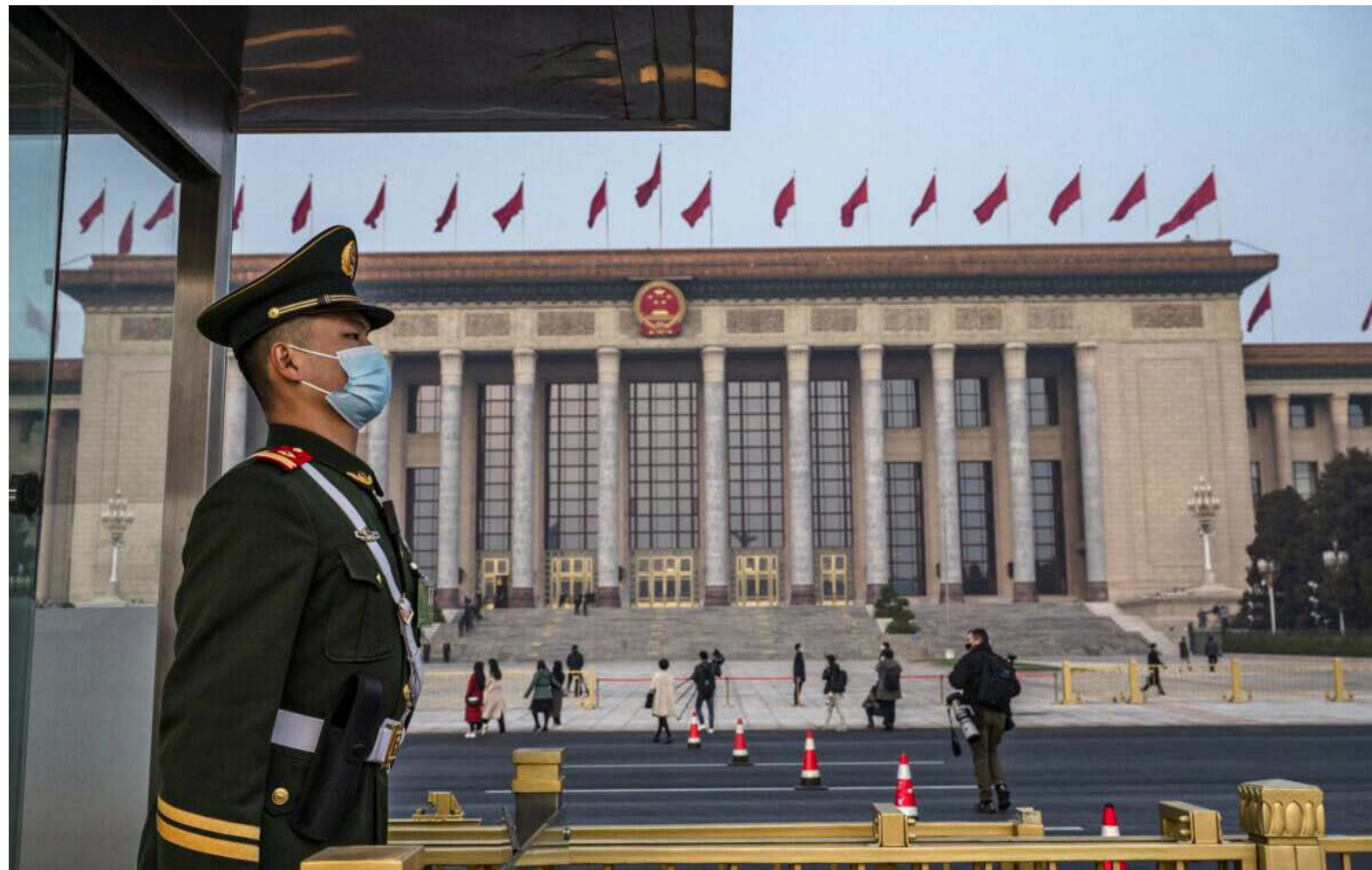
Food Insecurity

China cannot feed its 1.4 billion people, and to do so has become the second largest importer of foodstuffs in the world. The Chinese agricultural problem harks back to the inability of Soviet agriculture to feed the Russian people, from Vladimir Lenin's days through the demise of the USSR, as nicely summarized here.

It is axiomatic that communism interferes with the laws of supply and demand, with the result being shortages everywhere. The communist Chinese haven't solved the problem, either, despite all their gargantuan agrarian reforms (collectivization), great leaps forward, and other crackpot programs associated with an agricultural economy with Chinese characteristics.

Protests

The anti-zero COVID policy protests that erupted in numerous Chinese cities in the last quarter of 2022, dubbed the "white paper revolution," surely frightened the communists. Some protesters even demanded that Xi "step down"—an unprecedented public expression of discontent with the CCP's mandated lockdowns that paralyzed China since March 2020. Xi himself



A police officer stands guard outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 10, 2022.

NOEL CELIS/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES



China's leader Xi Jinping swears under oath after being firmly confirmed as head of the state for a third term during the third plenary session of the National People's Congress in Beijing on March 10, 2023.



(L-R) China's vice premier Sun Chunlan, Central Committee Political Bureau member Liu Guozhong, and vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Shi Taifeng attend the fourth plenary session of the National People's Congress in Beijing on March 11, 2023.

appeared to blink and abruptly reversed course, with "zero COVID" consigned to the dustbin of other CCP failures such as the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward.

Illegitimacy

Not the familial kind, but rather that of the communist regime itself. The communists assumed political power in China "through the barrel of the gun," as Mao Zedong opined. And the power of that gun—the People's Liberation Army—is what has guaranteed the continuity of the CCP's rule to this very day. Not the Chinese people! The communists and the people know this, and the CCP's greatest insecurity is their very illegitimacy in controlling China. The CCP fears its own long-suppressed people more than it fears "foreign devils."

Pronouncements From the Two Sessions

Retaining political power in China is the only issue that matters to Xi Jinping and the communists. Nothing else comes close. To do so, Xi is returning to Maoist methods by reemphasizing the importance of Marxist heterodoxy and controls in delivering "shared prosperity," "common security," "high-quality development," "putting people first," and other vague nonsense.

Beneath the flowery slogans, these are the measures that count most, as articulated by Xi during the two sessions:

- A blunt rebuke of U.S. policy (signifying a return to Lenin's policy of "antagonistic contradiction," as discussed here)
- A 7.2 percent growth in military spending (including a push toward nuclear parity with the United States and the willingness to use those new PLA capabilities to project power and intimidate neighbors)
- Institutional reforms that centralize CCP control of all sectors of the economy, including technology innovation, securities and banking regulation and reform, and other major financial reforms under the oversight of the State Council (centralized control is a standard Marxist tenet)
- Reunification with Taiwan (a top CCP objective since 1949)
- A focus on stability and self-reliance (stability is prized by the CCP above all things while self-reliance signals an inward concentration on self-sufficiency)
- Upholding the leadership of the CCP (he refers to "tackling the special challenges" which implies hardened measures to implement unanimity of action and control—spoken like the Marxist he is, with no dissent allowed)

Concluding Thoughts

China faces unprecedented challenges, many of which are the direct result of failed CCP policies over many years, including economic and demographic challenges, food insecurity, and unrest. In the face of these problems, Chinese leader Xi Jinping is tightening Marxist control of the communist-run regime and Chinese society in general. His unprecedented third five-year term is itself a sign that he views himself as a leader on par with Mao Zedong himself.

Xi's public pronouncements about the importance of Marxism have been consistent throughout his reign. He has been implementing a top-down return to Mao-style Marxism within the CCP itself (as reinforced here in 2016), as well as throughout Chinese society in general. The bitter fruit of the recent two sessions is clear evidence that Marxism remains Xi's guiding light. And that means big trouble for Chinese citizens and the rest of the world.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Stu Cvrk retired as a captain after serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of active and reserve capacities, with considerable operational experience in the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Through education and experience as an oceanographer and systems analyst, Cvrk is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a classical liberal education that serves as the key foundation for his political commentary.

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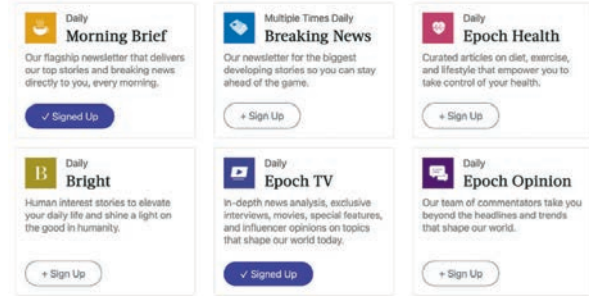
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