

EGMONT POLICY BRIEF 300

– MARCH 2023 –

China's 14th National People's Congress: No Ordinary Cups of Tea

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Compared to the periods of imperial rule that precede it, the Song dynasty government (960–1279) was more autocratic than any Chinese government had been. Under a growing Mongolian threat to the north, civil rule was complemented with an extremely centrally controlled army. The autocracy, centralization and anti-mercantile policies of the Chinese Confucian elite could not prevent private enterprises from blooming, however. Song rule was finally overthrown by the Mongols in 1279 and mercantilism trumped Confucian ideology for the centuries to come. After the fall of the final imperial dynasty in 1912, struggles between ideological orthodoxy and economic reality remained ever-present. The rise of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 did not change this either.

The 20th National CCP Congress of October 2022 suggested that ideology had prevailed over economy – a development that can be traced back to the 18th National Party Congress of 2012 when Hu Jintao (Youth League) was replaced by Xi Jinping (Princelings) as General Secretary of the CCP. The abrupt change in the PRC's Covid policy in early December 2022 after considerable civil unrest can, however, at once be interpreted as a setback for the ideological line of Xi Jinping, and a prominent return of economic realism within Chinese leadership. The architect – be it in a rough manner under his wavering leadership in Shanghai – of this sudden change in policy allegedly was Li Qiang, the No. 2 of the CCP Standing Committee and the incoming Premier of the PRC.¹ This reveals some of the personal intricacies within China's top

leadership. It also adds gravity to the question in how far the country's new executive power that was installed at the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) that met from 5 to 13 March 2023 reflects a China that is oscillating between ideological fervour and economic realism.

THE CHINESE SECURITY STATE

In the opening speech President Xi Jinping delivered at the 20th CCP Congress of October 2022, the term “security” (*anquan*)² was used 89 times (an increase from the 55 mentions in his opening speech at the 19th Party Congress in 2017). Also, in the ‘Government Work Report’ China's incumbent Premier Li Keqiang delivered during the so-called ‘Two Sessions’ (*lianghui*)³ on 6 March 2023, the term “stability” (*wen*) was overwhelmingly present.⁴ Concomitantly, the term “reform” (*gaige*)⁵ appeared only some 40 odd times in the 16,616 characters long report. This is considerably less than in the abovementioned speech at the 2022 National CCP Congress, and dwarfed by the more than 100 mentions in similar speeches of 2018 and 2019.⁶ The “stability” that was frequently invoked at the NPC appears to be synonymous with the consolidation and enhancement of the central power of the CCP in all sectors of society. This preoccupation with intra-Party stability was already evident from the line-up of the new CCCC Standing Committee. All six members (Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, and Li Xi) have either engaged with ideological work, only possess local administrative experience, and/or have apparently made it to the Standing Committee because of their direct allegiance to Xi. As specialists like Li Keqiang and Liu He retired, politicians with significant economic experience vanished from the Standing Committee.⁷

Illustrative of this enhanced focus on ideology were the newly implemented structural reforms announced in the “Party and State Institutional Reform Program” (*dang he guojia jigou gaige fang'an*)⁸ that take further power away from the state in favour of the CCP, a trend confirmed by the positioning of a CCP director in mid-sized companies and increased party control over media and propaganda. CCP control over the science sector – a prime field of Sino-US competition – has also increased significantly.⁹ Such changes can be interpreted against the background that staunch advocates of centralization of (Party) power have been retained in the CCP Standing Committee, such as Zhao Leji, new President of the NPC, who was head of the Nomenklature (Central Organization Department), and Wang Huning, who now heads the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and is a rare exception of someone who, largely due to his skills as political theorist, survived in the higher echelons of Party and state despite two transitions of power (2002/3 and 2012/3).

The double-sided message that Xi Jinping gave business delegates on March 6 also confirmed the supremacy of the CCP over the Chinese state when Xi showed concern for the many challenges that Chinese private enterprise had faced over the previous “not ordinary” (*bu xunchang*)¹⁰ years. Xi – just like Li Keqiang a day earlier – called for stability, albeit, in a more Leninist vein, simultaneously emphasizing that “it is necessary to guide private enterprises and private entrepreneurs to correctly understand the principles and policies of the Party Central Committee.”¹¹ Said changes in favour of strong Party-control were legitimized by one of the mantras at the NPC during March 2023: the need “to be self-reliant” (*zi li zi qiang*).¹² This term also returned prominently in Li Keqiang's Government Work Report, where “focussing on expanding domestic demand” (*zhuoli kuoda guonei xuqiu*),¹³ a prerequisite in achieving self-reliance, was listed as the key work point for 2023.¹⁴

The “not ordinary” mentioned by Xi does not only refer to the considerable economic and societal challenges brought by Covid-19, but also to the worsened relations with the West. Importantly, while Xi accused the entire West for its “checking, containment, and suppression”

(*ezhi, weidu, daya*)¹⁵ of the PRC, only the US was actually singled out as leading culprit.¹⁶ It is probably against this background, and more specifically with regard to US involvement in ever-contentious cross-Strait issues involving Taiwan, that we have to interpret Xi's elevation – or superseding – of second paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's 24-character formula (*ershi si zi jue*)¹⁷ that called to “observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs; calmly hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and, never claim leadership.”¹⁸ Xi's formula became: “Be calm; maintain [strategic] determination, seek progress and stability; be proactive and achieve things; unite [under the banner of the Party]; and dare to fight.”¹⁹ Xi's twofold message was clear: His grip on intra-Party power remains ever-solid and the PRC is ready for a high profile role on the international stage.

Qin Gang alluded to this more assertive “dare to fight” by connecting it to the tense Sino-US relations in what he, on March 6, called “dancing with wolves.”²⁰ Readiness to continue the Sino-US struggles was also evidenced by Xi in his selection of Li Shangfu to the position of Minister of Defence during the 14th NPC. Li holds the questionable honour of being the first-ever PRC Minister of Defence who is black-listed by the US – this over his role in the purchase of sanctioned Russian military equipment in 2017.²¹ While the blacklisting does not include a ban to US territory, his assignment is a clear signal that the PRC is ready to “dance”. In the words of Qin Gang: “If the U.S. does not step on the brakes and continues to go down the wrong road, no amount of guardrails will be able to stop derailment and rollover, and it will inevitably fall into conflict and confrontation.”²²

IDEOLOGY, BUT NOT AT ALL COSTS

That, under the abovementioned moves toward further centralization and increased CCP supremacy over the Chinese state, the rumoured merging of two (Party and state) important security institutions did not happen, may be called remarkable. This could show that although ideology may rule the day on the surface, some level of economic realism (again) prevails in practice. This is also

evidenced by the return of some financial expertise to the PRC's leadership. Li Qiang is a staunch ally of Xi, and first-ranked Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang, Xi's former chief-of-staff with little economic expertise, also has more of an "ideological" profile. But newly appointed second Vice-Premier He Lifeng (economist and Special Economic Zone-specialist) as well as third Vice-Premier Zhang Guoqing (corporate career) do hold considerable sway in the economic and financial fields.²³ Li Qiang's background (studied International Economics at the Central Party School in Beijing; obtained a MBA from Hong Kong Polytechnic University) and his words on March 13 can also be viewed as encouraging in this regard, as Li's first press conference was dedicated to soothing the beleaguered private sector and foreign capital – even admitting that there had been some "incorrect discussions" in Chinese society on the CCP's policy toward the private sector during 2022.²⁴ A final, albeit more indirect and symbolic, concession toward "economy" is the selection of Han Zheng, formerly seen as part of the coastal development focused "Shanghai Clique" that was headed by the late Jiang Zemin, as Vice-President of the PRC. While the post of Vice-President is essentially ceremonial, it shows that some lenience toward competing factions and their economy-first policies is retained – also note the contrast with the treatment of Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao during the CCP congress of October last year.

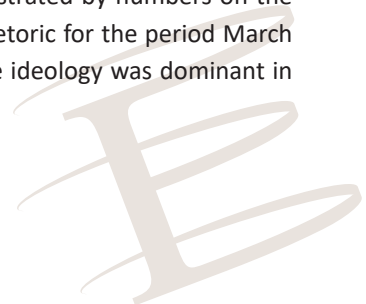
It should be remembered in this regard that Xi Jinping lacks the 'natural' revolutionary credentials – i.e., in founding the PRC – that the country's first two paramount leaders, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, enjoyed. Xi thus requires both ideological (the focus of Mao) and economic (the focus of Deng) means to maintain his grip on power. Harking back to the beginnings of the Xi era, the maintenance of CCP supremacy over the Chinese state is seen as the prerequisite to, after having celebrated the '1st One Hundred' (i.e., the 100th birthday of the CCP), also prepare for the celebration of the '2nd One Hundred' (i.e., the 100th birthday of the PRC in 2049). This was evidenced by the statement included in the document "Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party's Century-long

Struggle," published on 16 November 2021: "Since the 18th Party Congress, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. The main task facing the party is to realize the first centenary goal, start a new journey to realize the second centenary goal, and continue to move forward toward the grand goal of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."²⁵

From a terminological point of view, the semantic choice for '*Zhonghua minzu*' ("Chinese nation")²⁶ expresses a highly 'nationalist' interpretation as it not only concerns the fate of Mainland China, but also encompasses Taiwan. It might nonetheless be undue to say that the frequent usage of the term suggests that (re)gaining Taiwan is a goal that must be achieved at any cost for Xi Jinping. When new foreign minister Qin Gang held the constitution of the PRC in his hand during said maiden press conference of March 6, he implied that Taiwan is already *de jure* part of the PRC. In this vein, it comes to little surprise that neither his or Li Keqiang's words a day earlier held any notions of seeking direct military confrontation with Taiwan. This stands in contrast to, for example, Xi's speech on January 2, 2019, commemorating the 40th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," where he prominently stressed that the PRC always retains the option to use force against "Taiwanese separatists."²⁷ A somewhat more benign cross-strait line was reconfirmed by Xi himself during the closing speech at the 14th NPC in March 2023 in which he referred to adhering to the '1992 cross-strait consensus' in overcoming cross-strait differences, thus hinting at the primacy of finding a political solution for Taiwan.²⁸ The government's messaging – for now – remains one of maintaining the status quo under the *de jure* principle that Taiwan is already an inseparable part of the Chinese nation.

TILTING TOWARDS THE REALISM OF A HIGH-TECH ECONOMY

That Party and country continue to oscillate between ideological fervour and economic realism was, in the run-up to the 14th NPC, also illustrated by numbers on the tone of policy and media rhetoric for the period March 2022 to January 2023. While ideology was dominant in



Party and media discourse during the lockdown, rhetoric on economic realities clearly increased since October 2022, peaking in January 2023.²⁹

This implicit acknowledgment of economic realities may also be traced in the speech Xi Jinping delivered on 7 February 2023 at the opening ceremony of the “Seminar on Studying and Implementing the Spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” a speech that can be viewed as bridge between the 20th National Party Congress and the March 2023 meeting of the National People’s Congress.³⁰ While on the one hand repeatedly referring to the ideological successes since his rise to power at the 18th Party Congress in “rejuvenating the Chinese nation,” the speech also stated that, “In the new period of reform and opening up and socialist construction, our party has made a historic decision to shift the center of the party and the country’s work to economic construction;”³¹ as well as that “promoting Chinese-style modernization is a systematic project that [...] requires [...] important relations such as opening up to the outside world.”³²

The abovementioned mantras of “Chinese-style modernization” and “self-reliance” are most frequently connected to “*technological self-reliance*” (*keji zili (zhiqiang)*).³³ Despite the above rhetoric calling for “opening up,” the PRC has recently been increasingly cut-off from the world’s main microchip and semiconductor suppliers (The US, Taiwan, Japan, and The Netherlands). Also striking is the observation that only Li Qiang, the new Prime Minister – remember Li’s economic credentials in this regard – is mentioned to have taken the floor in approval of Xi Jinping’s 7 February 2023 speech while all members of the new Standing Committee were present at the occasion. This might be interpreted as that the three “ideological” newcomers to the CCP Standing Committee (Ding Xuexiang, Cai Qi, and Li Xi) who are also ranked lower than Li Qiang, Zhao Leji and Wang Huning are, will only have a secondary role in the new legislature. The latter observation seems sustained by the appointment of the new Vice-Premiers, and by the composition of the 20th Politburo. A majority of members of the Politburo have a technological background, which is also relevant

with regard to the civil-military fusion strategy of the country – a frontier now clearly expanded to outer space through the inclusion of several specialists in this area. On average, the members of the new Central Committee are also highly educated, with 114 members having enjoyed science-based educations and 121 having pursued business-related studies.³⁴

With the infamous middle income trap still looming over the PRC, upscaling the economy is more than a necessity to accumulate enough financial resources to sustain a growing elderly population and avoid popular upsurges of the type that occurred in February 2023.³⁵ China’s demographic dividend will truly come to a close around the end of this decade when those born during the post-Great Leap Forward baby boom will have retired. Indeed, achieving Xi’s desired state of “common prosperity” (*gongtong fuyu*)³⁶ will not come easy.

TIME FOR MODERATING

Oscillating between the two cups of ideological fervour and economic realism, the current Chinese leadership not only has to moderate between the different homeland interests and party factions, but also needs to prove itself as a responsible stake holder on the world scene. Its role in brokering a restoration of relations between Saudi-Arabia and Iran is a recent success in this regard. The country’s by now (in)famous ‘twelve principles’ packaged in the “On China’s position for a political solution to the Ukraine crisis” is also worth noting in this respect.³⁷ The 11th of these principles appeals for a continuation of the existing global economic system, a system, as acknowledged by the Chinese leadership, of which China has profited immensely.³⁸ Although the 2nd point of the document refers to “legitimate security concerns”³⁹ of involved parties, a remark that can be interpreted as aligning with Russia, the same 2nd point also warns against the introduction of a new Cold War.⁴⁰ The first point refers more prominently to the tribulations of Ukraine, meanwhile, as it states that “The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries should be effectively guaranteed.”⁴¹ The PRC’s approach to the Ukraine war can be expected to remain two-fold,

but ultimately aligning with its own foreign interests, as Qin Gang's comments on March 6 also seem to suggest.⁴² In this light, it comes as little surprise that, while Xi visited Moscow from 20 to 22 March 2023, high-level talks with Kiev were simultaneously pursued.⁴³

It should be remembered that China is, be it for pragmatic geopolitical reasons such as detaching Brussels from Washington, in favour of European integration and its agelong quest for strategic autonomy. This was reiterated by Qin Gang on March 6 with regard to the EU's positioning vis-à-vis Ukraine.⁴⁴ Although the new foreign minister's calls for a solution to contradictions in European security governance – meaning: inclusion of Russia in a security mechanism – might be improbable on the short term, the Chinese desire to resolve (or at least, alleviate) the situation in Ukraine while reconnecting with Brussels is genuine.

Furthermore, while considerable media attention has been given to the CCP's stress on the implementation of "Xi's thoughts on a Strong Army" (*Xi Jinping qiang jun sixiang*)⁴⁵ and the 7.2% increase of the People's Liberation Army's budget – not at all exuberant when compared to increases during the preceding decade⁴⁶ – the fact that China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomat corps will be boosted by a 12.2% budget surge is much less reported.⁴⁷ While the PRC's foreign policy is likely to take a more assertive approach, as also evidenced by Xi's new 24-character mantra mentioned above, toward the EU the door to diplomacy and compromise should remain open – without "dancing with wolves." It is in this vein that we have to understand the new slogan Xi Jinping introduced on March 15, "Global Civilization Initiative,"⁴⁸ which is concerned with maintaining the interlinked state of the globalized world.⁴⁹

Starting with the Song dynasty's centralization of power and oscillation between ideological orthodoxy and economy reality, historical examples in China have proven that, in the end, economy trumps ideology. Also today, it appears that, for China, ideology is ideology; politics is politics; and business is business. Rather than running the risk that the PRC fully aligns with Russia –

while unlikely, narratives, it should be remembered, still have the fearsome power to become self-fulfilling prophecies – and in the knowledge that, referring to the 2019 document "EU – China. A strategic outlook,"⁵⁰ China appears to want to be an economic partner for the EU, it is now up to the EU and its member states to, in a spirit of 'principled pragmatism' choose between the ideological cup of rivalry, or the economic cup of partnership where necessary and competition when pressed. The two cups of ideology and economy are still on the table – at least for the time being. A famous Chinese saying goes that "Tea turns cold when people move away,"⁵¹ Brussels should play a role in ensuring Xi's economic cup is kept warm(er).

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Endnotes

- 1 See “Yuwen shi jie: Xi Jinping xuancuo le Li Qiang?” (聿文视界：习近平选错了李强？; Yuwen's view of the world: Did Xi Jinping wrongly choose Li Qiang?), published on <https://www.voachinese.com/a/deng-yuwen-on-xi-and-li-qiang-20230306/6991519.html> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 2 安全.
- 3 两会. The term ‘Two Sessions’ refers to the simultaneous gathering of both the NPC (the Chinese Parliament) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a Senate-like advisory body.
- 4 “Li Keqiang zuo de zhengfu gongzuo baogao” (李克强作的政府工作报告; Government Work Report Delivered by Li Keqiang), (Zhaideng 摘登; Abridged version), published on <http://lianghui.people.com.cn/2023/n1/2023/0306/c452482-32637378.html> (last accessed on 8 March 2023). Examples are ‘wending’ 稳定 (stable; 2 times), ‘pingwen’ 平稳 (smooth), and ‘wenbu tisheng’ 稳步提升 (rising with steady steps), in the 205 Chinese characters of the first paragraph of the text. Other such expressions in the report are ‘wen zhong qiu jin’ 稳中求进 (“Seeking progress while maintaining stability”) – a term also readily employed by Xi Jinping.
- 5 改革.
- 6 See “Li Keqiang zuihou baogao ti ‘wending’ chaoguo 30 ci” (李克强左后报告提‘稳定’超过30次; Li Keqiang’s ultimate report mentioned ‘stability’ more than 30 times), published on <https://www.dw.com/zh/%E6%9D%8E%E5%85%8B%E5%BC%B7%E6%9C%80%E5%BE%8C%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A-%E6%8F%90%E7%A9%A9%E5%AE%9A%E8%B6%85%E9%81%8E30%E6%AC%A1/a-64893163> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 7 See Bart Dessein, Jasper Roctus and Sven Biscop, “Xi Jinping Seeks Stability: The 20th National Congress of the CCP”, *Egmont Policy Brief* 291, October 2022.
- 8 党和国家机构改革方案. See “Zhonggong zhongyang guowuyuan yinfa “dang he guojia jigou gaige fang’an” (中共中央国务院印发《党和国家机构改革方案》), published on http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2023-03/17/nw.D110000renmrb_20230317_1-01.htm (last accessed 19 March 2023).
- 9 See “China’s ‘two sessions’: Communist Party to oversee science sector in self-reliance push as US tech war intensifies”, published on https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3212718/chinas-two-sessions-communist-party-oversee-science-sector-self-reliance-push-us-tech-war?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=share_widget&utm_campaign=3212718 (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 10 不寻常.
- 11 “要引导民营企业和民营企业家正确理解党中央方针政策。” See “Xi Jinping: Zhengque yindao mingying jingji jiankang fazhan gao zhiliang fazhan” (习近平：正确引导民营经济健康发展高质量发展; Xi Jinping: Correctly guide the healthy development of the private economy and high-quality development) published on https://czj.sh.gov.cn/zys_8908/xwzx_8909/czyw/20230307/c03ec253c5b84e92837c2b88340aa0da.html (last accessed on 22 March 2023).
- 12 自立自强.
- 13 着力扩大国内需求.
- 14 See <http://lianghui.people.com.cn/2023/n1/2023/0306/c452482-32637378.html> (last accessed on 18 March 2023). Focus was also put on the issues of energy; stabilizing food production; rural revitalisation; acceleration of the construction of a modern industrial system; increasing efforts to attract and utilize foreign capital; and promoting a green turn in development. See <https://www.dw.com/zh/%E6%9D%8E%E5%85%8B%E5%BC%B7%E6%9C%80%E5%BE%8C%E5%A0%B1%E5%91%8A-%E6%8F%90%E7%A9%A9%E5%AE%9A%E8%B6%85%E9%81%8E30%E6%AC%A1/a-64893163> (last accessed March 19, 2023)
- 15 “遏制、围堵、打压。”
- 16 “Western countries led by the United States” (“以美国为首的西方国家”)
- 17 二十四字诀.
- 18 “冷静观察; 稳住阵脚; 沉着应付; 韬光养晦; 善于守拙; 决不当头。” Deng started to invoke this around the late 1980s. Later, Deng would habitually add four more characters at the end: “make a difference” “you suo zuo wei” (“有所作为”).
- 19 (“沉着冷静; 保持定力; 稳中求进; 积极作为; 团结一致; 敢于斗争.” See “Xuexi kuaiping. Zhiguan zhongyao de ‘ershisi zi jue’” (学习快评 | 至关重要的“二十四字诀”; Learning Quick Review | The crucial ‘Twenty-Four Character formula’), published on http://www.news.cn/politics/2023-03/07/c_1129418928.htm?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 20 “Qin Gang: “When jackals get in the way and evil wolves attack, Chinese diplomats must ‘dance with the wolves’ to defend their home and country” (“当豺狼挡道、恶狼来袭·中国的外交官必须‘与狼共舞’·保家卫国”), published on http://www.news.cn/politics/2023lh/2023-03/07/c_1129418241.htm (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 21 See “Shouwei bei Mei zhicai de jiefangjun shangjiang Li Shangfu shengren guofang buzhang Mei-Zhong jiaoliang weilai youxi kan” (首位被美制裁的解放军上将李尚福升任国防部长 美中较量未来有戏看; Li Shangfu, the first general of the People’s Liberation Army promoted to the Minister of Defense while Sanctioned by the US), published on <https://www.voachinese.com/a/china-s-new-defense-minister-is-a-general-the-us-sanctioned-03122023/7001100.html> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 22 “如果美方不踩刹车·继续沿着错误道路狂飙下去·再多的护栏也挡不住脱轨翻车·必然陷入冲突对抗。” See “Qin Gang: Ruguo Meifang jixu yanzhe cuowu daolu kuangbiao, zai duo hulan ye dang bu zhu tuogui fanche” (秦刚：如果美方继续沿着错误道路狂飙·再多护栏也挡不住脱轨翻车; Qin Gang: If the US continues to follow the wrong path, no amount of guardrails will stop derailment and

- overturning), published on <https://finance.sina.com.cn/jjxw/2023-03-07/doc-imyizhnw3493584.shtml> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 23 See “Lianghui jin tui fuzongli 4 ren cheng paiming di yi Ding Xuexiang Xi Jinping qinxin” (两会今推副总理4人称排名第一丁薛祥习近平亲信; The NPC and CPPCC now recommend 4 deputy prime ministers, claiming that Ding Xuexiang ranks first as Xi Jinping’s confidant), published on <https://www.rfi.fr/cn/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD/20230312-%E4%B8%A4%E4%BC%9A%E4%BB%8A%E6%8E%A8%E5%89%AF%E6%80%BB%E7%90%864%E4%BA%BA-%E7%A7%B0%E6%8E%92%E5%90%8D%E7%AC%AC%E4%B8%80%E4%B8%81%E8%96%9B%E7%A5%A5%E4%B9%A0%E8%BF%91%E5%B9%B3%E4%BA%B2%E4%BF%A1> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 24 不正确议论。See “Li Qiang: Zhongguo xin zongli lianghui jizhezhi ‘shou xiu’ meiyou jinju dan xiang minqi he waizi hanhua” (李强：中国新总理两会记者会“首秀”没有金句但向民企和外资喊话; Li Qiang: China’s new Prime Minister’s ‘first show’ at the press conference of the two sessions: no golden sentences, but appeals to private enterprises and foreign capital), published on <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-64938304> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 25 “党的十八大以来，中国特色社会主义进入新时代。党面临的主要任务是，实现第一个百年奋斗目标，开启实现第二个百年奋斗目标新征程，朝着实现中华民族伟大复兴的宏伟目标继续前进” See “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu dang de bai nian fendou zhongda chengjiu he lishi jingyan de jueyi” (中共中央关于党的百年奋斗中大成就和历史经验的决议(全文)), published on http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-11/16/content_5651269.htm. (Last accessed on 13 March 2023).
- 26 中华民族。
- 27 Contrast Xi’s 2019 “We do not promise to renounce the use of force” (“我们不承诺放弃使用武力”) with Li’s “[We must] resolutely oppose “independence” and promote reunification” (“坚定反“独”促统”) without the usage of “wuli” (“武力”; “force”) in 2023. See, respectively, “Xi Jinping zai ‘Gao Taiwan tongbao shu’ fabiao 40 zhounian jinianhui shang de jianghua” (习近平在《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会上的讲话; Speech by Xi Jinping at the 40th Anniversary of the Publishing of the ‘Message to Compatriots in Taiwan’), published on https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/zt_674979/dnzt_674981/qtzt/twwt/xjpsjstzyjh/202206/t20220606_10698873.html and <http://lianghui.people.com.cn/2023/n1/2023/0306/c452482-32637378.html> (both last accessed 18 March 2023).
- 28 “Shisi jie quanguo renda yici huiyi zai Jing bimu. Xi Jinping fabiao zhongyao jianghua” (十四届全国人大一次会议在京闭幕 习近平发表重要讲话; Closing Session of the First Session of the 14th National People’s Congress in Beijing. Xi Jinping delivers an important speech), published on <http://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202303/14/WS64100d97a3102ada8b2337cc.html> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 29 See exhibit 5 in <https://www.gspublishing.com/content/research/en/reports/2023/01/08/0443f746-b7e8-4144-ae9a-d1f4d2fe9a49.html> (last accessed 22 March 2023).
- 30 “Xi Jinping zai xuexi guanche dang de ershi da jingshen yanjiuban kaibanshi shang fabiao zhongyao jianghua” (习近平在学习贯彻党的二十大精神研讨班开班式上发表重要讲话; Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the opening ceremony of the seminar on studying and implementing the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China), published on http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2023-02/07/content_5740520.htm (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 31 “改革开放和社会主义建设新时期，我们党作出把党和国家工作中心转移到经济建设上来。”
- 32 “推进中国式现代化是一个系统工程需要[...]与对外开放等一系列重大关系。”
- 33 科技自立(自强)。
- 34 See Kjeld Eric Brodsgaard and Kasper Ingeman Beck. “The 20th Congress of the CCP: Personnel Appointments and Policy Directions.” January 2023.
- 35 See “San du lianren Zhongguo guojia zhuxi Xi Jinping you he dasuan?” (三度连任中国国家主席习近平有何打算? What are Xi Jinping’s plans after re-election as Chinese President for the third time?), published on <https://www.dw.com/zh/%E4%B8%89%E5%BA%A6%E9%80%A3%E4%BB%BB%E4%B8%AD%E5%9C%8B%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E4%B8%BB%E5%B8%AD-%E7%BF%92%E8%BF%91%E5%B9%B3%E6%9C%89%E4%BD%95%E6%89%93%E7%AE%97/a-64941105> (last accessed on 18 March 2023); “Elderly in China protest over slashed health benefits”, published on <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-64658729> (last accessed on 10 March 2023); Bart Desein and Jasper Roctus, “Outspokenly Unspoken: The Chinese People’s ‘White Paper Revolution’”, *Egmont Policy Brief* 297, December 2022.
- 36 共同富裕。Note that the term has been used by both Mao Zedong – implying egalitarianism through collectivism – as well as Deng Xiaoping – implying that a pursuit of greater riches of (first) a select few would eventually lead to egalitarianism. Xi’s usage seems, fittingly in scope of this article, to oscillate between the former and latter with, overall, an implied focus on more equal distribution of income that would increase social stability.
- 37 “Guanyu zhengzhi jiejie Wukelan weiji de Zhongguo lichang” (关于政治解决乌克兰危机的中国立场), published on http://www.news.cn/2023-02/24/c_1129392788.htm (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 38 Ibid. “All parties should earnestly maintain the existing world economic system” (“各方应切实维护现有世界经济体系”).
- 39 Ibid “各国的合理安全利益”。
- 40 Ibid. “Abandon Cold War mentality” (“摒弃冷战思维”).
- 41 Ibid. “各国主权、独立和领土完整都应该得到切实保障。”
- 42 “Sino-Russian relations are based on non-alignment, nonconfrontation, and non-targeting of any third party. They neither pose a threat to any country in the world nor are they subject to interference or provocation by any third party.” (“中俄关系建立在不结盟、不对抗、不针对第三方基础上，既不对世界上任何国家构成威胁，也不受任何第三方的干扰和挑拨。”) See “Zhongguo lianghui: xinren waizhang Qin Gang qiangying huiying Zhong Mei qiqiu shijian, cheng Zhong-E guanxi shi dianfan” (中国两会：新任外长秦刚强硬回应中美气球事件，称中俄关系是典范; China’s Two Sessions: New Foreign Minister Qin Gang Strongly Responds to the Sino-US Balloon Incident, Says Sino-Russian

- Relations Are a Model), published on <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-64871798> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 43 See “Xi Jinping Pujing fenghui: Zhong E yuanshou tongyi “tongguo hetan jiejué Wukelan weiji” (习近平普京峰会：中俄元首同意 “通过和谈解决乌克兰危机; Xi Jinping Putin summit: Chinese and Russian heads of state agree to “resolve Ukraine crisis through peaceful talks”) <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-65032731> (last accessed 22 March 2023).
- 44 “China-EU relations are not targeted at, dependent on, or controlled by a third party. No matter how the situation develops, China always regards the EU as a comprehensive strategic partner and supports European integration. We hope that Europe, having experienced the hardships of the war in Ukraine, drew lessons from the bitter experience and will truly achieve strategic autonomy and long-term peace and stability.” (“中欧是两大文明、两大市场、两大力量。中欧开展交往完全是基于彼此战略利益独立作出的选择。中欧关系不针对、不依附、也不受制于第三方。不管形势如何发展，中方始终视欧盟为全面战略伙伴，支持欧洲一体化。我们希望欧洲经历了乌克兰战火的磨难，痛定思痛，真正实现战略自主、长治久安。”) See “Qin gang: Zhong-Ou guanxi bu zhendui, bu yifu, ye bu shouzhi yu di san fang” (秦刚：中欧关系不针对、不依附、也不受制于第三方; Qin Gang: China-EU relations are not aimed at, dependent on, or controlled by a third party), published on http://cn.chinadiplomacy.org.cn/2023-03/07/content_85150437.shtml (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 45 习近平强军思想. See <http://lianghui.people.com.cn/2023/n1/2023/0306/c452482-32637378.html> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 46 While (official) military budget increases in the corona years were slightly lower (6 to 7%), most budget increases prior to 2020 fluctuated between 7 and 9 percent. Between 2011 and 2014 PLA budget increases exceeded 10%.
- 47 See “Lianghui kaimu: jujiao chongzhen jingji, Xi Jinping jin yi bu kuo quan” (兩會開幕：聚焦重振經濟，習近平進一步擴權; Opening of the two sessions: Focus on revitalizing the economy, Xi Jinping further expands power), published on <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20230305/china-xi-jinping-congress/zh-hant/> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 48 全球文明倡议.
- 49 “Xi Jinping tichu ‘Quanqiu wenming changyi’ (习近平提出全球文明倡议; Xi Jinping Proposes the Global Civilization Initiative), published on http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2023-03/15/content_5746927.htm (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 50 *European Commission and HR/VP contribution to the European Council EU-China – A strategic outlook*. Strasbourg, 12 March 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf> (last accessed on 18 March 2023).
- 51 人走茶凉.





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