

# Comment

editorial • opinion

**CHINADAILY**

中国日报

EDITORIAL

## A foundation of law

**THE FOURTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE 18TH** Central Committee of the Communist Party of China opens on Monday and will last for four days. The designated theme — governing through the rule of law — indicates how important this meeting will be for the future of both the Party and the country.

That this is the first time in 17 years the Party has designated such a theme for a plenary session speaks volumes about the importance the new leadership attaches to it. It is high on the agenda.

Yet, the more the concept of rule of law has been discussed, the more obvious it becomes that there is, today, much to be desired.

More than 50 minister-level or higher officials have either been indicted or placed under investigation for abuse of power in the past year or so, underlining the fact that the rule of law is sorely needed. It is perhaps the only way to eliminate, once and for all, the most serious threat to good governance and to secure the blessings of prosperity and justice to the people.

The fact that power today can effectively nullify the law, and that those in power can circumvent it, not only deprives the Party of its capacity to govern the country in a consistently fair and just manner but also disrupts the reasonable running of the marketplace. Abuse of power makes it impossible for fairness to prevail in the socialist market economy.

Despite the great achievements China has made over more than three decades, it will be very difficult for its economy to grow in a sound manner — and neither will society progress in a healthy way — unless fair competition and mutual trust can be secured and ordinary people's rights and interests can be guaranteed through the rule of law.

If the country is to achieve further reforms in various fields and establish and maintain a fair and just society, the power-worshipping mentality among government and Party officials must be eliminated. This is a core goal of the leadership.

Unless the overwhelming majority of Party and government officials not only respect the law, but follow it when making decisions, governing the country by the rule of law will amount to little but lip service.

It will be no easy job, and it will take time for the power-oriented way of doing things to be transformed. But the new Party leadership has shown it has the courage to face the challenge. We therefore have reason to expect much from the current plenary session as they work to put the country on the right track.

## OTHER VIEWS

### Historic moment

The convocation of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee, whose theme is promoting the rule of law, embodies the CPC's deepening perception on governance and the law.

*www.people.com.cn October 15.*

It is the first time that the CPC, as the ruling Party, will make a comprehensive plan on the rule of law in the form of a Party document. The session, which marks the ruling Party's significant strategic layout on how to govern the nation in accordance with laws and the Constitution, illustrates its new exploration of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The CPC Central Committee will focus on discussions on how to promote rule of law in a plenary session. ...

It has only six years to 2020, the deadline set for the realization of a well-off society for China, and 35 years to 2049, the promised year for China to be a prosperous, democratic, civilized and harmonious socialist modern nation. All these mean China has entered a crucial stage of deepened reforms. Only by sticking to "governance of the nation according to laws" will China realize its historic mission.

*www.xinhuanet.com.cn October 19.*

The National People's Congress, China's top legislature, should play a bigger role in the country's efforts to promote the rule of law. For example, the NPC can push for deepened reforms within the framework of the Constitution and laws through legislation to realize a benign interaction between reforms and the rule of law. The deeper the water China's reforms will enter, the more legal guidance and guarantees these reforms will need. The NPC enjoys a broad space for maneuvering in this regard.

*Beijing News October 17*

In the last three months, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee has held two conferences studying major issues related to comprehensively pushing for the rule of law. As the theme "China ruled by law" is set for the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the overall planning and prospect of a China governed by law will become increasingly explicit.

*Lianhe zaobao October 14*

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ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN

# Decoding Xi's future vision

President Xi's new book reveals his thinking about the country's governance and maps out a path for achieving the Chinese Dream

**T**he *Governance of China*, President Xi Jinping's new book, is unprecedented. Can analyzing the book elucidate Xi's thinking and illuminate China's future? Consider seven frameworks or perspectives: publishing purposes, overarching themes, content analysis, chain of developmental causation, domestic goals, domestic means and global principles.

**Publishing Purposes:** *substance, symbol, signal.* Substance means Xi's political philosophy and wide-ranging policies — organizing 79 speeches and commentaries in 18 chapters — to discern how Xi intends to realize the Chinese Dream, "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". Symbol means recognizing Xi's emergence as China's leader, with greater authority, confidence and support than observers had expected when he first took office two years ago. Signal means communicating Xi's way of thinking to global audiences in nine languages, an original and explicit outreach to engage the world on multiple levels.

**Overarching Themes:** *pride, stability, responsibility, vision.* Pride expresses the yearning of the Chinese people for the "great rejuvenation". Stability means maintaining the current political system (Socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Party's leadership). Responsibility means "realizing a moderately prosperous society by the centenary of the Party in 2021". Vision means "turning China into a prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country by the centenary of the People's Republic of China in 2049".

**Content Analysis.** How does Xi impute importance to topics? By examining what's in Xi's book, can we explore what's on Xi's mind? Of the book's 18 chapters, 11 relate to domestic affairs, seven to foreign affairs; six have political relevance; six concern standards of living; and four standards of

behavior. Categorizing the content, about a third is politics and people; another third on international relations; about 15 percent each on reform and development, and society and culture; and about 8 percent on national security and defense. Pervasive throughout is reform.

**Chain of Developmental Causation.** The Chinese Dream is founded on political stability, which enables far-reaching reform, which in turn promotes economic development, and which, when combined with rule of law and Chinese values, strengthens China's society, culture, ecology and even defense. Where is this "chain of causation" in Xi's book?

The first and last chapters affirm political stability: "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "The CPC Leadership", both of which assert the Party's political primacy and thus assure social stability. "The Chinese Dream" is the second chapter, proclaiming the grand mission of national resurgence and personal well-being. Then, chapters on deepening reform and economic development, which lead to chapters on rule of law, advanced culture, social undertakings and ecological progress.

**Domestic Goals:** *values, morality, prosperity, fairness, happiness.* Values: Xi's vision is to inculcate China's traditional values — "the thoughts of the ancient sages", exemplified by Confucianism — into socialist core values. ("We must take traditional Chinese culture as the base.") Morality: Derived from values, morality is described as "conscious law", and "civic morality" is characterized as needing improvement, while "paragons of morality are important banners for building public ethics". ("A gentleman takes morality as his bedrock" — a traditional virtue that Xi quotes.) Prosperity: "Common prosperity is the fundamental principle of Chinese socialism ... We will accelerate China's overall prosperity". Fairness: Because the Chinese people have always had a perception that "inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble", Xi says, China "should do a better job of promoting

fairness and justice." Happiness: The Chinese Dream, Xi says, is to "bring happiness to the Chinese people", to "ensure the people greater happiness" — but, he cautions, "happiness does not fall from the sky, nor do dreams come true automatically." (In Xi's book, "values" occurs about 120 times, "morality" 24, "prosperity" 67, "fairness" 44 and "happiness" 16.)

**Domestic Means:** *close to the people, realism, stability, reform, rule of law, combating corruption.* "Close to the people" is an all-encompassing way of thinking that shapes all decisions. Realism: "I have repeatedly said that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation can in no way be realized easily," Xi says. "While fully affirming our achievements, we should also be aware of our shortcomings." Stability: The precondition for all else, stability is a recurrent and foundational theme ("stability" occurs 125 times). Reform: Those who wonder whether Xi is a "real reformer" should read "Explanatory Notes ... Concerning Comprehensively Continuing Reform" (page 76). Examples: the market plays a "decisive role"; farmers given transactional property rights; the judicial system separate from the administrative system. Rule of Law: "A fundamental principle" and "the basic way to run the country" — the Fourth Plenary of the 18th CPC Central Committee, focusing on rule of law, is Xi's call to action. Combating corruption is a hallmark of Xi's administration, enhancing each of the five other domestic means. It is no accident that the chapter on combating corruption is positioned, significantly, between "Close Ties with the People" and "The CPC Leadership".

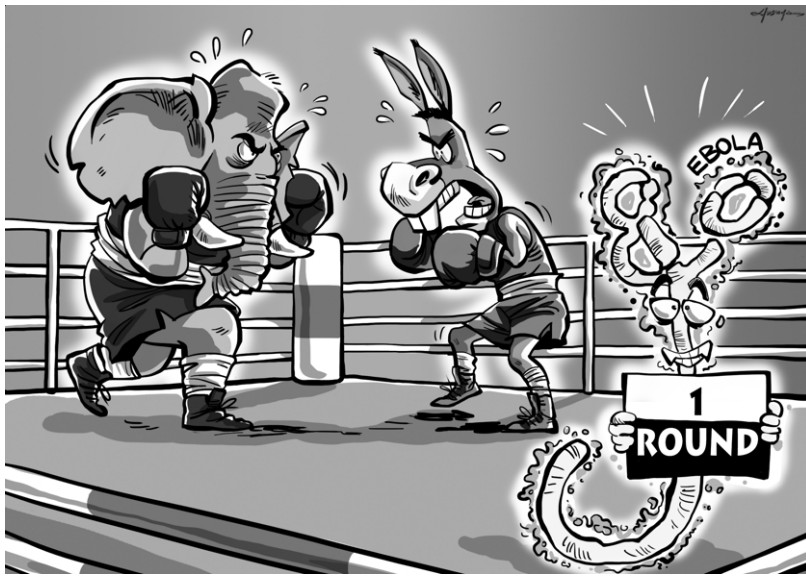
I bear witness to Xi's consistency. In 2006, Adam Zhu (my long-term partner) and I met privately with then-Zhejiang Party Secretary Xi. He stressed that while China should be properly proud of its successes, "achievements should not engender complacency". Xi said: "We need to assess ourselves objectively".

**Global Principles.** Consider five. Independence (China remains unaligned). Multi-polar world (no country dominates). One country, two systems (Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan). Peaceful development ("We have made a solemn pledge to the whole world that we will never seek hegemony"). Multilateral affairs (cooperation with the global community). These five global principles drive China's "new model of major country relations" (primarily with the US), "neighborhood diplomacy" (Japan, Vietnam, Korea, etc.), and "cooperation with developing countries" (such as in Africa). The Silk Road economic belt (land route and maritime) is President Xi's new initiative for multinational development.

Here's my blurb for Xi's book: "This book is a milestone, both in substance and symbol, offering openly the political philosophy of President Xi Jinping and recognizing his emergence as China's senior leader. While misunderstandings about China and its leadership abound, there is now no need to speculate about President Xi. Here is how he thinks, candidly and comprehensively." It is the pride of a patriot.

*The author is an international corporate strategist and political/economics commentator. He is the author of How China's Leaders Think and a biography of former president Jiang Zemin. He gave one of the speeches at the launching ceremony for Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, at the Frankfurt Book Fair on Oct 8.*

LI MIN



FU JING

## Courtesy, not confrontation, best for Europe

**M**inister of Commerce Gao Hucheng arrived in the lobby of the European Commission's headquarters at 9 o'clock on Saturday morning. He was led to the office of outgoing Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, who has been a thorn in the side of Chinese businesses because of his protectionist attitude ever since he took over the job in 2010.

De Gucht, 60, will be replaced in a few days by Swedish politician Cecilia Malmstrom, 46, when a newly constituted commission gets underway.

In the afternoon, the Chinese side announced a long-awaited agreement in principle: Brussels will not launch an investigation into subsidies of China's telecommunication imports into the European market. The EU side still needs to go through internal procedures for formal approval. The threat was mainly targeted at Chinese telecommunications equipment makers Huawei Technologies Co and ZTE Corp.

While the big picture of relations has been a positive one, the Europeans have annoyed Beijing from time to time — for example, by allowing the Dalai Lama to visit, by attacking China on human rights and by imposing high trade barriers.

Despite such irritants, Beijing has sent constructive signals. In the first half of this year, President Xi Jinping paid the first-ever visit of a Chinese president to the European Union's headquarters. And last week, at the summit of Asian and European leaders in Milan, Italy, Premier Li Keqiang hosted a special dinner for Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, thanking them for their contributions to pos-

itive relations. At the dinner, the leaders were thought to have touched on the telecommunication trade dispute, which involves about 1 billion euros (\$1.26 billion) annually.

The path to Saturday's solution was similar to a pattern set earlier, in mid-2013, after both sides worked through an anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigation involving China's multi-billion-dollar solar panel exports to the EU. Brussels began that investigation in 2012.

Beijing was unhappy that there had been no high-level invitation to visit Brussels a year after the launch of the investigation.

In May last year, Li made his first trip to Germany after taking office and won the support of the German government, which vetoed Brussels' decision, following dozens of EU member states.

Li made a last-minute call on Barroso the following month, as Brussels was about to vote on whether to end the solar panel dispute through amicable consultation.

Li's decisive role was crucial in preventing the escalation of a trade war. If Beijing had opted to deal with such disputes in an eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth manner, both sides would have been losers, with the EU taking the brunt. It has already suffered two economic recessions, and its jobless rate has been in double digits for a few years now.

Of course, with the trade volume between China and Europe expanding, and with investment pouring into Europe, China's government, its businesses and its media must work to make the most of the rising economic tide.

So far, there is no unified Chinese business council in Brussels to represent and lobby for Chinese investors in Europe. By contrast, a major US business organization reportedly has 300 staff members focusing on Brussels' policymaking.

A lack of communication and influence can easily lead to misunderstandings. Bureaucrats in Brussels usually follow Washington's lead when making policies that affect China.

Trade commission leaders need to make more field trips to member states to learn how Chinese businesses matter.

Take China's solar panel exports for example. The industry, which involves about 400,000 workers in China, has offered competitive products to thousands of European upstream companies and helped Europe achieve its status as a green energy leader.

In telecom, Huawei and ZTE are deeply integrated with European partners. And, incidentally, Huawei is a steady job creator in Europe, where young people, in particular, have faced huge employment challenges.

If De Gucht had kept the big picture in mind, he would not have made confrontational moves against China and its businesses.

Overall, the EU recognizes China as strong strategic partner. This is the starting point for dispute control. Amicability helps both sides win. With confrontation, everyone loses.

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