



XI JINPING'S EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE MARXIST IDEOLOGY AMONG CCP MEMBERS TO COUNTER U.S.

by JAYADEVA RANADE

Confronted with growing tensions as US-China relations rapidly deteriorate, Chinese President Xi Jinping has asked Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members to prepare for a “protracted war” on multiple fronts. In addition to anticipated difficulties on the technology, economy and potentially military fronts, China’s communist leadership has taken special note of repeated American statements -- particularly by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo -- about the threat from Chinese communism. For example, on August 25, the official CCP mouthpiece People’s Daily published a lengthy 3-page, 34,000-character response to Pompeo’s speech of July 23, at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in California.

2. Fears of ‘Peaceful evolution’ have been a serious concern to the CCP leadership since the time of Mao Zedong and, more so after the collapse of the Soviet Union. ‘Peaceful evolution’ is interpreted as the US effort to: introduce multi-party democracy; replace the socialist command economy with a free-wheeling capitalist system; and eliminate the CCP’s monopoly as China’s sole ruling political party, in other words dismantling of the CCP.

3. CCP CC General Secretary Xi Jinping has consequently visibly redoubled efforts to further consolidate Marxist ideology and ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. Xi Jinping has consistently maintained that only “socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism, and not some other doctrine,” and it is a significant ideological issue that “concerns the future fate of the Party, the long-lasting peace and stability of the country, and the cohesion and solidarity of the nation.” Since the time he took over as Party General Secretary at the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in November 2012, Xi Jinping has launched numerous campaigns in the Party, military and government to stress the importance of Marxism and the CCP. Writing in a recent (2020/16; August 16,2020) issue of the Party’s flagship theoretical magazine Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth), Xi Jinping emphasised that "the Marxist political economy is an important part of Marxism" and that the foundation of China's "political economy can only be Marxist political economy, not other theories".

4. In the wake of steadily increasing US pressure on China in recent months, escalated by the imposition of sanctions against CCP cadres and proposal to ban US visas to members of the CCP, a number of new ideological campaigns have been launched to strengthen adherence by the Party’s 92 million members to the CCP’s policies and principles without wavering. An earlier editorial in Qiu Shi (July 15 ) exhorted cadres to “protect” Xi Jinping’s position as the “core” and warned Party members that: “upholding and strengthening the overall leadership of the party is related to the future and destiny of the party and the country”. It emphasised, “there must be no ambiguity and vacillation”. It also cited Xi Jinping’s speech to the Politburo on June 29, where he listed five goals as the Party’s organisational line in the new era.

5. Qiu Shi explained these as to: (i) uphold and improve the Party's leadership and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics. He stated this was important because political and organisational lines are linked. Xi Jinping also highlighted the importance of ensuring ideological and political consistency at all levels of the government with the Central Committee; (ii) arm the entire Party with the Party's scientific theory. Xi Jinping stated that Marxism should be used as a guide to strengthen and centralise party thought; (iii) build the Party's organisational system to unify and strengthen grassroots and local governance. Most important was to ensure their resolute obedience to the Central Committee; (iv) build the backbone of the ruling ranks and talent team, focusing on recruiting talented and virtuous people. Essential to this goal, Xi Jinping said, is to strengthen the education and training of cadres and deepen cadre system reform efforts; and (v) build the party's organisational system. He focused on democratic centralism as the key to the leadership system of the party, and expressed the need to "continuously improve the institutionalisation, standardisation, and the scientific level of the Party's organisational construction."

6. On July 8 2020, Xinhua reported the start of a new, comprehensive ideological campaign with the CCP CC General Office issuing a "Notice of the Central Propaganda Department and the Central Organization Department on Earnestly Organizing and Studying the Third Volume of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China". Published by the Central Propaganda Department the third volume of 'Xi Jinping: The Governance of China' is a selection of 92 reports, talks, comments and speeches of Xi Jinping covering 19 topics and spanning the period October 18, 2017, to January 13, 2020. The notice declared that the volume is instrumental to promoting understanding of 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era', strengthening the 'four consciousnesses' (四个意识), consolidating the 'four confidences' (四个自信), and achieving the 'two defends' (两个维护), and advancing global understanding of the appeal of the Chinese system. It stated that "studying the volume is an important political task" and "theoretical study groups of party committees and party organizations" at all levels "should incorporate the volume in their study plans. The same applies for party and cadre schools, as well as universities, party committee lecture groups, new era civilization practice centres, county-level media convergence centres, and the 'Xuexi Qianguo' learning platform app, so as to innovatively advance the "[flying] into the homes of ordinary people" of the Party's scientific theories". Lastly, the notice highlighted the need to connect theory with practice in order to overcome the negative impact of the novel coronavirus, ensure economic stability and well-being, achieve a prosperous society, combat poverty, and 'seize the opportunity to begin a new national journey' in constructing socialist modernization.

7. Independently, 60-year old Chen Yixin, Secretary-General of the Party's Political and Legal Affairs Commission (PLAC) and a protege of Chinese President Xi Jinping, convened a meeting in Beijing on July 8 to launch another new nationwide "education and rectification" campaign this time targeting the country security apparatus. In a hard-hitting speech to officials attending the meeting, Chen Yixin said "We must scrape the bone to remove the poison" and "We must drain away from the filth and bring in freshwater." He called for a "turbulent Yangqing style 'Yan'an rectification', and soul-stirring Yangwei-style themed education which strives to build a political and legal iron army that the party and people can trust, trust, and can rest assured". The campaign is initially planned to be conducted in only five cities and four counties, but will go nationwide from early 2021. The campaign will come to an end in 2022. It

is anticipated that the campaign will be thorough and result in the dismissal and arrest of numerous PLAC cadres.

8. The following day (July 9) China's Ministry of Public Security convened a meeting to mobilise personnel for the new "Persist in Political Construction of Police, Comprehensively and Strictly Govern Police" education and rectification campaign. Delivering a speech to start the campaign, the Minister of Public Security (MPS) Zhao Kezhi emphasised implementing the spirit of Xi Jinping's guidance, the Central Committee's opinions on political construction, and the Ministry's work meeting. He called for strengthening the "four consciousnesses," "four confidences," and "two defends," and 'closely centering on loyalty to the Party', service to the people, fair law enforcement, and strict requirements for discipline. He said that in its campaign, the Ministry must focus on leadership at all levels and use "the courage of self-revolution and spirit of rectification (整风的精神)," further solidify loyalty, strengthen party leadership, improve its "political ecology," and specify stricter goals for a disciplined work style. Zhao Kezhi instructed the Ministry to address "impurity" of ideology, politics, organization, and work style, "get rid of bad apples," purify its ranks, and ensure that its ranks "provide a staunch political guarantee for earnestly carrying out the New Era mission and tasks entrusted by the Party and people well." The two campaigns appear designed to allow Xi Jinping full control over the law enforcement system, which is the one pillar of the Party-state where he has not fully consolidated control.

9. Weeks later, the 'People's Daily' reported the commencement of a new campaign aimed at primarily the legal establishment. It said that on July 14, the CCP CC's Propaganda Department, Organisation Department, Political and Legal Affairs Commission, Cyberspace Administration of China, General Office of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, and National Legal Awareness Office had jointly issued a notice launching a 'program of study and education' about the National Civil Code. The notice called for "thorough study and propaganda of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important treatises on governing the country fully according to the law, especially the spirit of important directives on the civil code," and study and propaganda on the significance of the code's implementation, its basic principles, and its content. The notice urged departments to create multimedia news propaganda on Party and media-affiliated websites, detailed "new media" plans, focused reports, authoritative interviews, various commentary series, and propaganda and activities for "modern platforms of dissemination" like the social media. It also mandated that study of the civil code should be incorporated into compulsory legal classes for leading cadres and that it should be made a more substantial component of education on rule of law in elementary, secondary, and higher education.

10. Another more extensive nationwide campaign encompassing students, the academic community and Party members was launched in mid-July. This new campaign requires CCP members, school students and academics to study the "Four Histories." The "Four Histories" are: "the history of the CCP, the history of new China, the history of the reform and opening up, and the history of socialist development." Parents have been told that there will be exams when the new semester begins and students will be tested. China's official media described the "Four Histories" as a new political drive and "key task" to promote the contents in classrooms at colleges and universities. East China Normal University in Shanghai has

incorporated the campaign material in its seminar series so that students will learn, and also “preach” its contents to people outside the campus.

11. Writing in the China Education Daily (August 13) Lu Yanqin, Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of Zhejiang Jiaxing University, reiterated the importance of studying the "Four Histories" and said it will "help young people understand why the leadership of the Communist Party of China is the people's choice and history's choice". He said carrying out the "Four History" education among young people and integrating the "Four History" education into the teaching of ideological and political courses and related professional courses, will “help young people have a deep understanding of the hard-won New China's ‘red regime’ and the hard-won socialism with Chinese characteristics”.

12. Liu Yanqin also explained the ‘Red Gene’ campaign and its significance. He cited CCP CC General Secretary Xi Jinping’s recent congratulatory letter to the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Young Pioneers when he pointed out that it is necessary to "inherit the red gene, cultivate new generations, unite, educate, and lead the young pioneers to be the successors of the cause of communism”. He described the "red gene" as the "life code of the Chinese Communists. It records the path of the Communists’ descent into the past. It contains the nature and purpose of a Marxist party. It is embedded with the ideals and beliefs of the Communists to fight for. It gathers the great revolutionary spirit of the Communist Party of China. The original intention and mission of the Communist Party of China". He said "To strengthen ideological and political education for young people, it is necessary to carry on the red gene well, and strive to cultivate socialist builders and successors who develop comprehensively in the new era of morality, intelligence, sports, and art".

13. The Red Gene campaign was first started in the PLA in 2018. In June 2018, the Central Military Commission (CMC) promulgated the ‘Outline for the implementation of inheriting Red Genes’ from generation to generation. Its objective is to develop the Red Culture so that the officers and men will always accept the influence of the Red Culture, so that the Red Gene will remain viable and show its power.

14. These campaigns are intended to strengthen the commitment of Party members and cadres to Marxist ideology and ensure they don’t waver as US pressure intensifies. Xi Jinping is aware that US intentions include putting the CCP under enormous pressure and moving him out of office, which is why the stress in recent months on the “two defends”, or “protecting” Xi Jinping as the “core” of the CCP CC. However, together with the imposition of increasingly restrictive security controls, the strain on the Chinese people could be considerable.

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(The author is a former Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India and is presently President of the Centre for China analysis and Strategy.)

