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Basic Analysis of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: (3) Major Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics

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Continuing from parts (1) and (2) of the Basic Analysis of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, this paper analyzes the policies set out at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (19th CPC National Congress), with a focus on the policies that were formulated with regard to foreign policy, a wide range of security fields, and Taiwan.

Overall, we could say that General Secretary Xi Jinping has, more than ever before, demonstrated a stance of actively pursuing an international order that China needs and demands, based on his confidence in China as a major power.

Perception of the International Situation

With regard to the international affairs that form the basis of the country's foreign policy, Xi assesses that China is "still in an important period of strategic opportunity." This "period of strategic opportunity" refers to a period of great accomplishment, wherein China has the ability to strengthen its comprehensive national power and raise its position in the global arena over the first 20 years of the 21st century through stability in the international environment and development of its own economy. This was the assessment made by Jiang at the 16th CPC National Congress, held in 2002. Against the background of this assessment is the recognition of greater room for action by China amidst the United States' diminishing interest in the Asia Pacific region, in part due to its focus on the

war on terror. This recognition has been passed on to the 18th CPC National Congress and was similarly followed through in the 19th CPC National Congress.

Xi stated clearly the perception that "the world is undergoing major development, transformation, and adjustment," and "the trends of global multi-polarity, economic globalization, IT application, and cultural diversity are surging forward." The multi-polarity of the world signifies a change in the balance of power in the world and the weakening of the unipolar system of the United States. Amidst such changes to the balance of power, he explains, "changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up; countries are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent, and relative international forces are becoming more balanced."

"Major Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics"

In this report, Xi indicated the direction that Chinese diplomacy should take based on the premise of changes in the balance of power. He emphasized that "major power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics aims to foster a new type of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind." Wang Yi has described this as the two pillars of Xi Jinping's thinking on diplomacy (The People's Daily, August 30, 2017).

The statement "major power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" could be described as a phrase that

expresses China's new self-perception. Traditionally, China has always refrained from phrases such as "major power" to describe itself. When such words are used to describe a country, they are customarily coupled with "developing," such as indicating China's self-perception as a "developing major country." However, as the rise of China becomes a reality, China itself has gradually begun to position itself as a major power without any hesitation, and this statement in Xi's report is believed to be a reflection of such a change in perception.

"New type of international relations" is a concept that Xi proposed to Russia in March 2013. Based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, it defines a new form of international relations. A similar concept to this is "a new type of major country relations between the United States and China." A new type of international relations has been presented as an even broader concept that encompasses a new type of major country relations between the United States and China.

In his report, Xi described mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation as the characteristics of a new type of international relations. When China uses the phrase "mutual respect," it signifies, firstly, non-intervention on domestic matters, as well as respect for core interests. Fairness and justice express the direction of the current reform of an unfair and unjust order. China's perception is that the existing international order until now reflects the interests of the West, with aspects that are unfair and unjust to China; hence, it recognizes that there is a need to carry out a reform in this respect. Furthermore, based on the premises of mutual respect, fairness, and justice, it will be possible to build a relationship of win-win cooperation. This is the direction that China aims to move toward for the new type of international relations.

Next, the statement "community with a shared future for mankind" could be described as a depiction of the ideal vision of international order that China aims to realize. The phrase "community with a shared future"

first appeared in the white paper *China's Peaceful Development* published in 2011, and the expression "community with a shared future for mankind" was first incorporated at the 18th CPC National Congress, held in 2012. Xi also called for the joint establishment of a community with a shared future for mankind in a speech he delivered in Geneva on January 18, 2017.

Xi emphasized the building of a "community with a shared future for mankind" in his report for the 19th CPC National Congress, and he incorporated this expression into all parts of his speech related to foreign diplomacy. In his explanation of this "community," Xi listed the following concrete points: 1) mutual respect and equal accord, renunciation of Cold War thought and power politics, and a new type of relations between countries that connects them by partnerships and not by alliances; 2) solving problems through dialogue; 3) promotion of trade and investment liberalization, and of economic globalization; 4) respect for the diversity of civilization; 5) cooperation on environmental protection and climate change.

The point about not forming alliances and renouncing Cold War thought and power politics is a criticism and check on the United States' network of alliances. The other items also point to an ideal vision of a world that is also generally recognized by the international community today. This suggests that the direction toward an international order that is desirable for China is a world without the alliance network of the United States.

Reform of Global Governance

In relation to this, Xi highlighted that "China follows the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration in engaging in global governance [...] and stands for democracy in international relations," and that "China will continue to play its part as a major and responsible country (and) take an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system."

The concept of “shared growth [gongshang gongjiang gongxiang]” was originally a principle associated with the Belt and Road Initiative, but it is now also used to describe China’s perspective on global governance. “Shared growth” is based on negotiations and exchanges, as well as mutual trust, with other countries, and it signifies the effort to resolve issues such as international political conflict and economic contradictions through dialogue. When China issues such a message, it includes, at the same time, China’s criticism and resistance toward the “hegemonism” embraced by the West. In the original Chinese text, “shared growth” also encompasses the ideas of “co-building,” which involves expanding shared interests through joint participation with other countries, and “co-prosperity,” which refers to equal development and reaping of profits among all the countries involved.

This principle, while related to the Belt and Road Initiative, is at the same time related to global governance. This can be perceived as the close relationship between the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative and China’s global governance vision. With regard to the Belt and Road Initiative, the sections covering foreign diplomacy matters describe deepening cooperation and exchange in the aspects of policy, organization, funds, and public opinion with the respective countries, as well as establishing an international platform for cooperation. The section about the economy also touches on the Belt and Road Initiative. Here, the emphasis is placed on strengthening cooperation regarding innovation, linking land and sea/domestic and foreign partners, and creating an open and bidirectional structure between the East and the West, based on the principle of “shared growth.”

A Wide Range of Security Fields

China captures domestic security, external security, traditional security, and non-traditional security in a comprehensive manner and has put forth the concept of taking a “holistic approach to national security.” In the

Xi Jinping report, “pursuing a holistic approach to national security” was included as one of the 14 policies for the future. In November 2013, the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee was established as a security organization based on this holistic approach to national security. However, the National Security Commission’s activities are not very clearly defined, and it has not been a prominent organization; there are even doubts about the extent to which it is functioning. In this report, Xi spoke about “improv(ing) our national security system,” drawing attention to the extent to which the National Security Commission is active.

Based on such a holistic approach to national security, China’s security is not restricted to the military domain, but it also spans a wide range of sectors.

One of the phrases that drew much attention at the 18th CPC National Congress was a “strong maritime country.” This phrase was used again in the 19th CPC National Congress but in a different section of the report. In the report for the 18th CPC National Congress, the building of a “strong maritime country” appeared in the section about creating an ecological civilization. In this report, however, it was used in a paragraph under the economic section that describes China’s coordinated regional development strategy: “We will accelerate development in the border areas and ensure their stability and security. We will pursue coordinated land and marine development and step up efforts to build China into a strong maritime country.”

It is not clear what this change in the positioning of the phrase signifies. A “strong maritime country” crosses various dimensions, ranging from military security and the economy, to environment and civic life. Hence, it would not be unusual to find it in any section of the report. Regardless, for departments whose work are related to maritime affairs, including the State Oceanic Administration, the statement about “step(ping) up efforts to build China into a strong maritime country,”

delivered personally by Xi, should provide a strong push for their activities.

Apart from this, the section about society notes the protection of domestic security as a form of national security and clearly acknowledges the fight against infiltration/subversive activities against the country, terrorism, racially divisive activities, and religious extremism. The section about culture also calls for the establishment of an integrated governance system on the Internet.

Taiwan and Hong Kong

With regard to Taiwan, the basic tone has remained unchanged since the 18th CPC National Congress. Xi reaffirms the continuation of the policy of “peaceful reunification,” “one country, two systems,” and of “work(ing) for the peaceful development of cross-straits relations and advanc(ing) the process toward the peaceful reunification of China.”

However, discussions on the cross-straits mechanism of mutual trust for military security, as well as negotiations and enactment of cross-straits peace agreements, which were included in the report for the 18th CPC National Congress, are missing from this report. This is probably an indication of the limitations faced by China—its inability to deter China from asserting its independence since the time of former General Secretary Hu Jintao, and its failure to engage the popular will of Taiwan in its route towards reaching an agreement on unification through repeated economic, cultural and political exchanges about cross-straits relations, as seen by the election of President Tsai Ing-wen.

Considerably strong expressions were also used in statements opposing to the independence of Taiwan. Furthermore, Xi points out that “We have the resolve, the confidence, and the ability to defeat separatist attempts for Taiwan independence in any form.” This could once again be described as an indication of China’s deepening

confidence.

The report for the 19th CPC National Congress adopts a different tone towards Hong Kong in comparison with previous reports. Xi states that “The policy of “one country, two systems” has proved to be the best solution to the questions of Hong Kong and Macao, left by history, and the best institutional guarantee for the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao after their return.” This expression was also used by Xi at the ceremony commemorating the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China in July 2017.

Hong Kong and Macao are Chinese territories, and the report demonstrates China’s approach of further promoting their integration as a part of China. In other words, Xi stated in his report that “The development of Hong Kong and Macao is closely tied to development of the mainland,” and that “We will continue to support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating their own development into the overall development of the country.” These statements highlight the aspect of economic integration. He also spoke about promoting assimilation in the sense of national identity in the following statement: “We will develop and strengthen the ranks of patriots who love both our country and their regions, and we will foster greater patriotism and a stronger sense of national identity among the people in Hong Kong and Macao. With this, our compatriots in Hong Kong and Macao will share both the historic responsibility of national rejuvenation and the pride of a strong and prosperous China.”

Yang Jiechi’s Entry into the Central Committee

Finally, looking at the aspect of personnel reshuffling, the entry of State Councilor Yang Jiechi into the Central Committee of the COC is a new and unprecedented phenomenon. The inability of cadres in the diplomacy department to enter the Central Committee is a trend that has continued, with the last being former Vice Premier Qian Qichen. This trend has been perceived as a lowering

in the status of the diplomacy department in China's overall policymaking structure. In that sense, the induction of State Councilor Yang Jiechi into the Central Committee has drawn attention as an attempt to put the brakes on this trend of decline.

While the background leading to Yang Jiechi's entry into the Central Committee is unclear, it probably carries the following significance. Firstly, Yang Jiechi holds the same military rank as the two Vice Chairmen of the Central Military Commission. This may bring about a recovery in the status of the diplomacy departments,

which have constantly been subordinated to a lower rank than the military. Secondly, until now, although State Councilor Yang Jiechi has been meeting with the US Secretary of State as a representative in US-China strategy and economic dialogues, his rank within the Party has remained low, creating an imbalance in ranks in comparison with his American counterpart. This latest move thus corrects this situation.

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