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My first question is: why did Xi Jinping's speech take three and a half hours? In any case, I would like to invite my old friend Professor Jia Qingguo to take the floor.

JIA Qingguo

Thank you very much, Ambassador Park. It is a great honour to come here to share with you some of my thoughts. As Ambassador Park mentioned, I was lucky enough to be invited, not to participate, but to attend the opening and closing ceremony of the 19th Party Congress as an observer in the capacity of a member of the standing committee of the CPPCC, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Why did he take three and a half hours to deliver the speech? I think this was a special occasion and he wanted to explain his thoughts systematically. His thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics was to be included in the party charter and will probably be included in the State Constitution early next year when the Chinese People's Congress is held. Therefore, he needed the time to explain his views, and there are a lot of things in his report that deserve careful study. I was sitting there trying to understand and I was quite impressed.

A lot of things were mentioned in the report and one that we should probably pay attention to is he talked about the principal contradiction facing Chinese society, that is, the contradiction between the unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing need for a better life. This is the central problem that the Chinese Communist Party is supposed to deal with in the coming years. In the past, it was something like the contradiction between the growing demand for material culture and the backwardness of social production.

Now Xi thinks that China is no longer that backward, but China's economic development remains inadequate and unbalanced to meet the ever-changing demands of the people for a better life. He also talked about the change in the way of development, which means less emphasis on GDP growth and more emphasis on the quality of economic growth. He also talked about the environment and says, 'Green mountains and clear waters are better than mountains of gold and silver'. He also talked about the necessity of the rule of law. Here, the Chinese understanding of the rule of law is somewhat different from what is understood in the west. The same is true with democracy. The CPPCC, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the organisation to which I belong is regarded as something special in Chinese democracy. It is like a senate without legislative power, it is a political institution involving eight different democratic parties and a lot of social organisations are represented in that institution to provide orderly consultation. It is supposed to help the ruling party, the Chinese Communist Party to improve its rule by voicing criticisms in a constructive way, rather than trying to take over.

On foreign policy, Xi also talked about trying to build a community of common destiny. He believes that we are in the same boat and should try to help each other. We can have competition, but our relationship is not a zero-sum relationship. Rather, through our efforts, we can achieve a win-win outcome. He also spent a lot of time talking about how to make the Party cleaner and more effective.

On foreign policy we find both continuity and change. On the continuity side, he has advocated a non-zero-sum approach to China's relations with the outside world. I remember, six years ago, when he was the vice president of the PRC, he gave a speech at Tsinghua University and said to the effect that if you want to develop, you should let other countries develop. If you want security, you should make sure that other countries have security. If you want to have a better life, you should make sure other countries have a better life. He has adhered to this line of reasoning and approach on China's relationship with the outside world.



In his speech, Xi also used the concept of Community of Common Destiny, one Xi has been using for some time. He also talked about multilateral cooperation as a way to deal with international and global problems and that China should assume great power responsibilities in dealing with world affairs.

In terms of change, I think if you read the foreign policy section of the report very carefully, he mentioned that China should help maintain the world order. In the past, the Chinese Communist Party always talked about the need to reform the world order to make it more just and fair, now he is still talking about that, but he also talked about the need to maintain the world order.

Upon reflection, I think it means two things. One is that China has benefited much from the world order and now China looks at the world order from a stakeholder's perspective. The second is that, as China rises, it increasingly becomes a superpower. A superpower cannot take a free ride in the world order; it has to take care of the world order. If a superpower takes a free ride, the order collapses. Therefore, this is something new.

Xi also said that China's successful developmental experience provides another option to develop for other developing countries. This has caused a lot of concerns in other countries. Some people say that the Chinese Communist Party is advocating a China model to compete with the American or Western approach to development.

One should not interpret Xi's claims that China's developmental experience provides another option to developing countries, as the beginning of China's efforts to push for the so-called China model. I do not think that is the case. Actually, he was talking about Chinese experience. China officially labels the experience as socialism with Chinese characteristics and the stress is on the uniqueness, rather than the universality, of China's developmental experience. That is to say, every country should adopt their own approach to development in the light of their own country's unique set of conditions. In other words, the message is that you do not have to follow the Western approach in your development. Instead, you can find your own path of development according to your situation. China has been successful in this regard; you can be successful too.

In general, the foreign policy section sounds very positive. If these views were presented by Donald Trump, the world would probably be exhilarated.

What to expect in the next five years? I think we will have more continuity than change in China's foreign policy. Secondly, China's foreign policy will have more Xi's imprint. In other words, during the past five years, some institutions in China have had more leeway in implementing Xi's policies either because they did not understand Xi's line of thinking or because they think they can get away with flexibility. By this time, they should have already understood Xi's ideas and that the consequence of refusal to implement Xi's policy is like. Therefore, China's foreign policy will probably be more uniformly implemented. It may also be more nuanced and pragmatic, because Xi and his new team have five years to learn how to deal with international relations, and to perfect their skills.

PARK In-kook

Before I invite our second panellist from China, I have some questions for Prof. Jia Qingguo: Why didn't Xi Jinping appoint heir apparent like previous presidents? This has led to speculation that Xi will extend his stay in power even after five years, either officially or indirectly. You mentioned that there will be more continuity than change but his step-by-step approach to gaining influence is being noticed by outside observers. By the year 2050, China aims to become the arbiter in the Asia-Pacific politically or militarily. We also expect China will be more assertive in the next five years, more so than in the first five years. We saw the same assertiveness in the wake of the Beijing Olympics in 2008. You also talked about developing countries and the China model. China is currently giving loans rather than grants, which is different from the usual OECD practice. I wonder why China tries this very independent and unique model. That is the list of my questions, if you or some other colleague would like to answer.