

**CHINA AFTER THE 20TH PARTY
CONGRESS**

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Executive Summary

1. Xi Jinping's dominance at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was almost absolute and far beyond expectations. Xi now is in a strong position to push for whatever vision he has for China with no outward opposition. As such, the 20th Party Congress is likely a watershed in China's development.
2. The Party Congress is marked by the return of ideology. Xi's work report devoted one of the 15 parts to ideology, elaborating on how Xi Jinping Thought has integrated Marxism with Chinese cultural traditions and adapted the latter to address the questions of the 21st century.
3. The Party Congress introduced the concept of "Chinese modernisation" that features CPC leadership, common prosperity, integrated material and cultural-ethical advancement, harmony between humanity and nature, and peaceful development.
4. The foreign policy implications of the Marxist "historical materialism" include Xi's conviction that he is "on the right side of history". In his words, "The sound theoretical guidance of Marxism is the source from which our Party draws its firm belief and conviction and which enables our Party to seize the historical initiative".
5. Domestically, the Party Congress reinforces Xi's "dual circulation" development strategy, high-quality growth, and emphasis on comprehensive and integrated security. Chinese society is likely to be more regimented and under closer surveillance. As a result, China may be turning inward despite the CPC's claim of continued "reform and opening up".
6. With his unchallenged status as the paramount leader, Xi's personality is expected to have major influence on both politics and policymaking. Xi is meticulous, methodical and systematic; power-sharing or delegation is not in his strength. More consequentially perhaps, the theme of "struggle" has moved to the centre of Xi's vision for the future.

7. With his self-fashioned personae as a theoretician ideologue, Xi may not always stay practical and “seek truth from facts” in policymaking. His ambition exceeds that of Mao, with national, global, cultural and environmental dimensions. He also has more resources under his disposal than Mao did.

8. Clearly, China under Xi is determined to blaze a distinctly Chinese path to modernisation to build “a new human civilisation”. It has the institutional capacity and likely steady leadership in an increasingly stormy world. However, the 20th Party Congress’ line and new developmental thrust is largely untested. China will be different but not necessarily more successful.