



# STATE OF THE GAME

## BUILDING PACAF'S COMPETITIVE MINDSET

JUNE / JULY 2021

### CCP TURNS 100, NOT MELLOWING WITH AGE

Nationalistic fanfare and strident soundbites mark the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) celebrated the centenary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in July. Not surprisingly, the celebration was filled with [nationalistic fanfare](#) and pageantry including military flyovers and a victory lap declaring the CCP's accomplishments in achieving a modern Chinese society. Beyond all the pomp, a speech by Xi Jinping highlighting China's newfound swagger has raised eyebrows with its unapologetic aggressiveness.

In remarks made during the 100th anniversary celebration, Xi [stated](#) "Chinese people would not be bullied, oppressed, or enslaved by foreign powers," and that "any attempts to do so, would result in a collision with a Great Wall of 1.4 billion Chinese people."

The statement included a chengyu, or figure of speech, which can mean "total failure" to express the totality of this "collision." Breaking the idiom into its individual parts yields a literal translation of "head bashed, blood flowing." Though the phrase originates from a well-known Chinese children's story called "Journey to the West," and is familiar

to native Chinese speakers, the context is not well known outside of China.

While Xi's message of a more assertive PRC was certainly aimed at stirring up an increasingly nationalistic Chinese populace, his words also were clearly aimed at international audiences who have criticized the PRC harshly in recent years for [human rights abuses](#) in Xinjiang, [erosion](#) of the rule of law in Hong Kong, and [unfair](#) trade practices abroad. In response, Twitter has exploded with debate among Chinese and outside observers examining the underlying motivations for using such a phrase to express China's newfound assertiveness.

Xi's remarks appear to be on brand with a shift to what many Western observers call "[Wolf Warrior diplomacy](#)." In a February 2021 meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese senior diplomat Yang Jiechi, Yang bluntly criticized the United States for undermining global stability and [stated](#) that "the U.S. doesn't serve as a model for others." These remarks and other encounters with Chinese diplomats characterize the increasing assertiveness with which CCP engages the world.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Chengyu are a type of traditional Chinese idiomatic expression, most of which consist of four characters. They often originate from Chinese literature or history, like the phrases "Achilles' heel" or "turn a blind eye" in English. For example, the expression "all messed up" [originates](#) from two chaotic periods in Chinese history: the Western Han dynasty's "seven kingdoms" revolt and a competition for power between eight royal family members during the Jin Dynasty.



# HOW CHINA VIEWS ITSELF

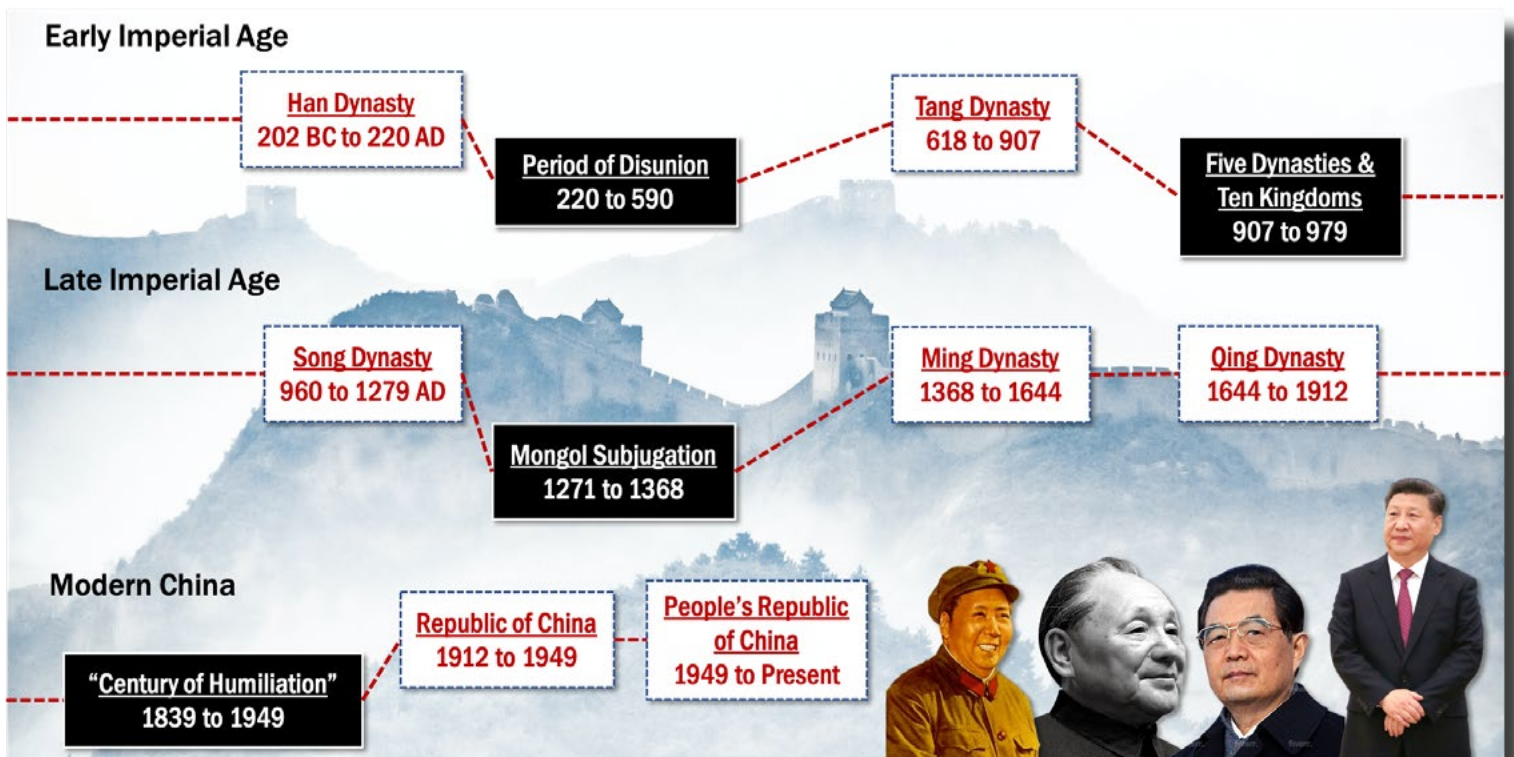
Understanding how China views its past drives present-day competition.

The narrative of the People's Republic of China is of a unified state dating back thousands of years with periods of disunity or weakness viewed in the narrative as aberrations. Each dynasty brought incredible technological and cultural progress, often outpacing Western civilization. While Europe was in the Dark Ages, the Tang Dynasty boasted the largest city in the world and expanded the Silk Road to connect the wealthy empires of Central Asia. Before Christopher Columbus was born, explorers during the Ming Dynasty had embarked on seven voyages around the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans.

In reality, the size and power of various dynasties ebbed and flowed. Periods of progress were divided by disunity, chaos, and subjugation by militarily superior neighbors. Furthermore, dynastic political decisions had long-term, unforeseen consequences. Despite the success of the revolutionary maritime voyages, the emperor concluded that the wider world had nothing to offer and ordered ships scuttled and Chinese ports closed, setting conditions for later European intervention and colonization.

The PRC labels the most recent period of civil war and loss of territory and authority to regional and Western rivals the "Century of Humiliation." Using the narrative of national humiliation to drive his agenda, Mao Zedong secured control over the current Chinese mainland, attempting to transform the PRC into a modern state with a series of campaigns and plans that resulted in a devastating Cultural Revolution and the deaths of millions.

Before the 20th century, China's leaders turned their back on Mao's catastrophic policies of continuous revolution, focusing instead on development, and in some nationalist minds, reestablishing China to its rightful place at the center of world affairs. Deng Xiaoping and succeeding leaders set the foundation for Xi Jinping to articulate a comprehensive vision for China's path back to preeminence. Xi's "China Dream" encapsulates the idea of a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation that seeks to reestablish China's alleged historically central role in regional and world affairs. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is one instrument to achieve this goal.



# HOW CHINA'S MILITARY VIEWS ITSELF

**The PLA's self-view and Communist control enables expansion of the PRC's influence and control.**

Understanding how the PLA views itself can provide insight into the strategic motives and objectives of the CCP.

The PLA differs greatly from the U.S. military in its organization and mission. Both militaries provide external security and defense of sovereignty, but the PLA is also expected to provide internal security for the CCP and defend against the defection and insurrection of Chinese citizens. At its core, the PLA [views](#) itself as an armed wing of the CCP. PRC law states that CCP leadership holds command of the PLA through the Central Military Commission. Much like the Soviet military, allegiance to the CCP is maintained through political commissars separate from the chain of command. These quasi-commanders ensure that tactical and operational decisions are in accordance with the CCP's strategic interests and objectives. External to the PLA, poorly structured interagency coordination within the government suggests that the military wields substantial influence in driving its own policymaking agenda, which [includes](#) preserving CCP rule through enforcing territorial sovereignty and internal security.

When the interests of the government and the will of the people are in conflict, the PLA has proven that it will turn on its own citizens to maintain CCP rule. This allegiance was illustrated during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. Protests originated from legitimate grievances over CCP corruption, yet

180,000 to 250,000 PLA troops were mobilized to put down the protestors. The PLA's allegiance to the CCP guarantees that the party will continue to subdue the Chinese people and expand China's influence and control in the region.

The CCP is expanding the role of the PLA beyond preserving territorial sovereignty and maintaining internal peace. Increasing national power, Chinese nationalism, and a shifting geopolitical landscape allows the PLA, driven by the CCP, to move unchecked into missions that advance the CCP's goals of national rejuvenation and the so-called "China Dream." Aggressive military modernization, the One Belt One Road initiative, and violations of international norms in the South China Sea are meant to increase China's global footprint.

**Why It Matters:** The CCP is expanding the PLA's role beyond preserving territorial sovereignty and maintaining internal peace. Chinese nationalism, a shifting geo-political landscape, and the need to secure the resources, supply chains, and markets driving the Chinese economic engine forced the CCP to expand PLA mission sets in order to secure their national rejuvenation. The result is an aggressive military modernization program, the One Belt One Road initiative with its military support element, and the violations of international norms in the South China Sea; all meant to expand their global footprint and protect the "China Dream."

## DID YOU KNOW?

In June 1989, PLA troops were ordered to suppress political protesters in Tiananmen Square. When civilians refused to leave the square, a PLA soldier opened fire indiscriminately. Shocked Beijingers began to clash with troops throughout the city and were met with varying levels of resistance from the PLA. CCP leaders were surprised to learn not all [PLA units](#) would readily attack their countrymen. PLA leadership believes that in the initial stages of the 1989 crisis, soldiers from Beijing serving in the city were unwilling to fire on their neighbors. The later crackdown was facilitated by bringing in troops from other provinces and regions outside the city who didn't identify so closely with the protesters. Since the crisis, the PLA has [forbidden](#) enlisted personnel from serving in the region from which they originate.



# FORGETTING BITTER HISTORICAL LESSONS

As the PRC turned 100, Xi Jinping **unveiled** a new written history of the party that includes significant changes from previous editions. This truly Orwellian new edition deletes messages that contradict Xi's efforts to centralize power in his own hands and assert it over his neighbors. While previous editions devoted a whole chapter to criticizing Mao Zedong's "Great Leap Forward," which led to the death of millions, as a "bitter historical lesson [that] shouldn't be forgotten," the 2021 edition simply folds it into a watered-down chapter. If Xi is willing to give the "Great Leap Forward" a pass, what might he excuse in the future?

SOURCE: CHUN HAN WONG

144 | 中国共产党简史

坚持四项基本原则给党的事业造成的严重损失，全会决定撤销他所担任的党内一切领导职务，并对中央领导机构部分成员进行调整。全会选举江泽民为中央委员会总书记，增选江泽民、宋平、李瑞环为中央政治局常委，政治局常委会由江泽民、李鹏、乔石、姚依林、宋平、李瑞环组成。江泽民在会上表示：这次中央领导核心虽然作了一些人事调整，但是，党的十一届三中全会以来的路线和基本政策没有变，必须继续贯彻执行。在这个最基本的问题上，我要十分明确地讲两句话：一句是坚定不移，毫不动摇；一句是全面执行，一以贯之。通过这次全会，党中央明确宣告，党的基本路线和十三大的决策，她不会因为发生这场政治风波而动摇，从而使党在惊涛骇浪中坚持了建设有中国特色社会主义的正确航向。

在十三届四中全会召开之前和全会以后，邓小平多次郑重提出：现在要真正建立一个第三代领导。第三代的领导集体必须有一个核心，要有意识地维护这个核心，就是江泽民同志。他强调：中国的关键在于共产党要有一个好的政治局，特别是好的政治局常委会。只要这个环节不发生问题，中国就稳如泰山。他一再表示，新的领导班子一经建立就有秩序的工作，我就不再过问。一个国家的命运建立在一两个人的声望上面，是很不靠谱的，是很危险的。新的领导要一切负起责任，放手工作。“这就是我的政治交代”。

1989年9月4日，邓小平向中央政治局正式提出辞去中共中央军事委员会主席职务的请求。两个月后，党的十三届五中全会批准邓小平的这一请求，同时决定，江泽民为中共中央军事委员会主席。全会认为，邓小平从党和国家的根本利益出发，在自己身体还健康的时候辞去现任职务，实现他多年来一再提出的从领导岗位上完全退下的愿望，表现了一个无产阶级革命家的广阔胸怀。全会对他身体力行地为党承担领导职务终身制作出表率，表示崇高的敬意。

从十三届四中全会到五中全会，以邓小平为核心的第二代中央领导集体和以江泽民为核心的第三代中央领导集体实现了顺利交替，保证了党的政策的连续性、稳定性和国家的稳定，使社会主义改革开放和现代化建设能够继续前进。这是党在政治上成熟提高、组织上坚强有力的明证。

在1989年11月的十三届五中全会后，党中央把一度被延误的治理整顿

1989

中国共产党简史

党的十三届四中全会和新的中央领导集体的形成

1989年6月，党的十三届四中全会召开。鉴于赵紫阳在关系党和国家生死存亡的关键时刻犯了支持动乱和分裂党的严重错误，全会决定撤销他所担任的党内一切领导职务，全会对中央领导机构成员进行了调整，选举江泽民为中央委员会总书记。

江泽民在会前指出：“这次中央领导机构作了一些人事调整，但是，党的十一届三中全会以来的路线和基本政策没有变，必须继续贯彻执行。在这个最基本的问题上，我要十分明确地讲两句话：一句是坚定不移，毫不动摇；一句是全面执行，一以贯之。”

党的十三届四中全会前后，邓小平多次郑重提出：现在要真正建立一个第三代领导。第三代的领导集体必须有一个核心，要有意识地维护这个核心，就是江泽民同志。他强调：中国的关键在于共产党要有一个好的政治局，特别是好的政治局常委会。只要这个环节不发生问题，中国就稳如泰山。

全会以后，新的中央领导集体坚决、全面地贯彻党的基本路线，一手抓治理整顿，深化改革，一手抓党的建设、精神文明建设和思想政治工作，全国政治局面迅速趋向稳定，经济形势逐步好转，思想战线出现新的转机。

在新的中央领导集体已卓有成效地开展工作的情况下，1989年9月，邓小平向中央政治局正式提出辞去中央军事委员会主席职务的请求。11月，党的十三届五中全会同意

2021

第九章 走自己的路，建设有中国特色社会主义 | 143

工作重新提上日程。这一阶段治理整顿大体分两步进行。第一步是在调整结构的同时，以启动市场，争取经济适度发展为侧重点。第二步是治理整顿，深化改革的重点逐步转到调整产业结构、提高经济效益上来。根据这一部署，国务院从1990年底开始，陆续采取了一系列督促企业提高效益和搞活国有大中型企业的措施。与此同时，陆续采取了一系列督促企业提高效益和搞活大中型企业的措施。其中最引人注目的是上海浦东的开发。1990年4月，上海浦东开始实行经济技术开发区和某些经济特区的政策。浦东的开发开放迅速启动，在全国人民的支援和上海人民的努力下，浦东地区奇迹般地崛起成座座高楼大厦和其他现代化设施，成为国际化的经济和金融中心之一。上海的国内生产总值在五年内翻了一番，等于再造了一个上海，是20世纪90年代我国改革开放进一步深化和取得显著成就的重要标志。

经过全国人民三年的努力，到1991年底，投资和消费需求双膨胀的局面有所缓解，通货膨胀得到控制，流通领域混乱现象得到整顿，经济秩序有所好转，农业生产连续两年丰收，扭转了前四年的徘徊局面。工业生产从1990年下半年开始逐步恢复到正常年份的增长速度。1991年外商直接投资达119.77亿美元，比1989年增长一倍多，外贸实现顺差。这样，治理整顿工作以取得显著成就而基本结束。

在对外关系上，中国成功地挫败了国际反华势力企图阻挠中国社会主义方向的图谋。在1989年春夏之交的政治风波后，以美国为首的西方国家对中国实行“制裁”，多方施加压力。九十年代初，东欧剧变，苏联解体，社会主义在世界范围内处于低潮，旧的世界格局被打破，新的世界格局尚未形成。世界力量对比严重失衡，中国面临着巨大压力和考验。面对这一复杂、严峻的国际形势，邓小平及时作出透彻分析，提出冷静观察、稳住阵脚、沉着应付、韬光养晦、善于守拙、决不当头、有所作为的战略策略方针。他特别强调，中国自己要稳住阵脚，认真地正地改革开放局面下。国际形势对我们，要泰然处之，维护我们独立自主、不信邪、不怕鬼的形象。只要我们选择的社会主义道路走到底，谁也压不垮我们。在上方方面，中国在国际上坚持原则，顶住压力，利用矛盾，多做工作，有力地维护了国家的主权和尊严，不断开拓对外工作的新局面，在和平共处五项原则的基础上，中国积极发展与周边国家的睦邻友好关系，进一步发展与第三

1989

中国共产党简史

党的建设和思想政治工作的加强，促进了我国的政治稳定和社会安定，为治理整顿、深化改革创造了重要的思想政治条件。

应对国际风云变幻

1989年政治风波过后，美国政府和国会发表声明，对中国政府进行污蔑和攻击，并宣布一系列“制裁”措施。7月，西方七国首脑和欧洲共同体会议宣布对中国中止高层政治接触，延缓世界银行贷款等。此后不久，国际形势接连发生重大变化，苏联解体、东欧剧变，世界社会主义运动陷入低潮。

面对以美国为首的一些西方国家掀起的反华浪潮和国际上不绝于耳的唱衰中国的论调，邓小平反复强调，要保持稳定和坚持改革开放，做好一件事，我们自己的事。关键是自己要搞好。他告诫说，西方国家向中国施压，根本点就是要中国放弃社会主义。对这股逆流要旗帜鲜明地坚决顶住。国际舆论压我们，要泰然处之，维护我们独立自主、不信邪、不怕鬼的形象。只要沿着自己选择的社会主义道路走到底，谁也压不垮我们。

1989年9月，江泽民在庆祝中华人民共和国成立40周年大会上坚定地表示：“企图排斥、孤立中国是很不明智的，也是根本不可能的。任何经济制裁，都丝毫不能动摇我们振兴中华、坚持社会主义道路的决心，丝毫不能动摇我们同世界各国人民友好相处的信念。”

为了扭转局面，争取主动，党和政府确定20世纪90年

2021

In the 1989 version, Deng Xiaoping **warned** against the dangers of one-man rule: "Building a nation's fate on the reputation of one or two people is very unhealthy and very dangerous." This quote is omitted in the 2021 version.

However, the revised edition makes sure to retain admonitions from Deng referring to the need for a "core" in every generation of CCP leadership and the need to protect the "core" leader. When he wrote this, Deng was referring to his successor, Jiang Zemin. Today, the "core" unmistakably means Xi.

In support of this shift, the new edition removes other famous quotes that contradict Xi's autocratic style and resurgently aggressive foreign policy. One of the most significant deletions is Deng's renowned call for China to "hide our light and bide our time."

**Why It Matters:** By revising history, the CCP manipulates its citizens into believing nationalistic fervor and autocratic rule is a normal state of affairs, stifling voices of moderation and increasing the risk of miscalculation both domestically and internationally.



A monthly review of competition thoughts and activities from PACAF's

