

COMMENTARY

China's Strategic Priority Is Nation-Building

Back in the U.S. from her most recent visit to Beijing, Helga Zepp LaRouche discusses the optimistic perspective presented to the 15th Party Congress

It is amazing that an event, which is regarded by the largest population on this planet, namely a nation of 1.2 billion people, as being of extraordinary historical significance, is almost completely blacked out by the ever-so-“democratic” and “free” Western media. And indeed, there can be no doubt, that the 15th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China, which took place in Beijing in September, has very far-reaching importance, not only for China, but for the world at large.

The most crucial aspect of this congress was the speech by President Jiang Zemin; and, given his visit to the United States at the end of October, and the various British-inspired propaganda campaigns against China, it is most useful to come to a realistic conclusion about the intention of a representative of another country, if one takes a close look at what he is doing at home.

If one goes back to the principles of the U.S. Founding Fathers, and, in particular, John Quincy Adams's idea of a “community of principle” among nations, then every American patriot, as well as the patriots of every other country, should be very happy about Jiang's speech. If the American reader frees himself of the idea, that it is the mission of America to impose American ideology, “democracy,” and the “free market” on other nations, and instead, pays respect to the fact, that China has an uninterrupted 5,000-year-old history, whose Asian cultural characteristics are

Helga Zepp laRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, led a delegation to Beijing, for a full week of meetings and discussions in late September, her first return to China, since she was an invited speaker at the State Science and Technology Commission's Symposium on the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge, in May 1996. Mrs. LaRouche first visited China in 1971.



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President Jiang Zemin at the Party Congress: “A passionate, nation-building speech.”

quite different, then one can only be very pleased about the direction China is going.

There is only one way to characterize Jiang Zemin's speech: It was a passionate nation-building speech, of a scope and vision that has not been heard from any head of state for a very long time, and, certainly, it was unmatched in its cultural optimism. The most important outcome of the congress, was the fact that it wrote into the party constitution, the idea that “Deng Xiaoping Theory” is the party's guiding theory, which means a consolidation of China's policy of scientific and technological progress, economic growth, political stability, and reaffirmation of Confucian values.

Jiang Zemin started out to present the two great historical tasks, with which China was confronted after the Opium Wars of 1840 (in which the British Empire had inflicted incredible suffering upon the Chinese people),

namely: (1) to win national independence; and, (2) to achieve “common prosperity” for the people. The American reader should note that even if the historical and cultural predicates differ, still the starting point for the history of modern China is actually no different than that of the United States, which gained its own independence from the British Empire. And the issue over which the American War of Independence was fought, was, after all, the right to its own manufacturing and, therefore, exactly the same idea as the “common prosperity of the people.” Both nations had historically the same enemy: the British Empire.

The Legacy of Sun Yat Sen and Deng Xiaoping

Jiang Zemin emphasized that it was Sun Yat Sen, who first introduced the notion of “rejuvenating China,” by proposing a modernization program, a fact of great

importance, insofar as Sun's book, *The International Development of China*, outlines many of the infrastructure and development programs which the Chinese government is pursuing and which are the reason for its outstanding economic performance. Jiang then defined goals for the next century, including doubling the GNP, as it stands in the year 2000, over the decade between the years 2000 and 2010, "so that people enjoy an even more comfortable life." He added a vision for the next fifty years: "By the middle of the next century, when the People's Republic celebrates its centenary, and the modernization program has been accomplished, by and large, China will have become a prosperous, strong, democratic, and culturally advanced socialist country."

Such an optimistic prognosis is not without foundation. Everyone who has observed China's economic performance over the last fifteen years can confirm that, provided China can protect itself from the ongoing collapse of the international financial system, and provided the necessary reforms are introduced in time. The figures given in Jiang's report are otherwise impressive: an average annual increase of the GNP between 1992 and 1996, as well as an annual *per-capita* increase in the income in real terms for the urban population of 7.2%, and of 5.7% for the rural population. At the same time, the number of rural poor greatly decreased, by 32 millions.

If one considers the history of the Communist Party of China, it is, indeed, of the highest importance that Deng Xiaoping Theory is being affirmed in the constitution. Because, as Jiang points out, Deng's famous speech, "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, and Unite as One Looking to the Future," was given at the end of the Cultural Revolution, when China was at a crucial juncture and was faced with the question of which course to take; the speech shattered the argument of the



Dr. Sun Yat Sen: China's first modernization program.

"two whatever's." This refers to the notion created by then-party Chairman Hua Guofeng, after the death of Mao Zedong, that "whatever" decisions he had made must be firmly upheld, and "whatever" instructions he had given must be followed unswervingly.

Deng, who had fallen into deep disgrace when the "Gang of Four" dominated events, was fully rehabilitated, and with the Third Plenary session of



Deng Xiaoping: restored economic development after the Cultural Revolution.

the XI Central Committee in December 1978, he rose to become the highest leader of China. He immediately made an economic buildup the center of all efforts. His idea that "praxis is the only criterion for checking the truth" won out, over the theory of the "two whatever's." An article with this title first appeared in *Lbun Dongtai* (*Theoretical Trends*), the Central Committee party school newspaper, and the next day it was published in *Guangming Ribao* in full. It began a new era in China of economic development, and of China's finding its way back to "Chinese characteristics."

Similarities to LaRouche

As Jiang Zemin underlined, Deng's theory provided a new method, a new scientific judgment to analyze, among other things, the "success or failure of other socialist countries in the world" and "the gains or losses of developing countries in seeking development." Now, while Deng's theory is not the same as the LaRouche economic method, there are similarities, insofar as both provide a yardstick for the efficiency of economic performance. And concerning the success or failure of other socialist countries: There can hardly exist a firmer determination than China

has right now, to avoid absolutely the fate of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Commenting further on Deng's theory, Jiang said: "Hence, Marxism will necessarily advance along with the development of the times, practice, and science; it can not remain unchanged. It is not book-worship [meaning dogmatism or fundamentalism—HZZ], it is a method to study and solve practical problems in China. . . . One of the basic reasons for the achievements in the reform, the opening up, and the modernization drive over the recent period of nearly twenty years, is that we corrected the erroneous concepts and policies transcending the primary stage of socialism." Deng emphasized: "Ours is an entirely new endeavor, one that was never

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mentioned by Marx, never undertaken by our predecessors, and never attempted by any other socialist country. So, there are no precedents for us to learn from.”

Jiang then outlined the general orientation of the continued economic reform, such as gradually putting an end to underdevelopment, turning China into an industrial country, where the proportion of the population working in non-agricultural areas will be in a majority, turning the whole society into one with fairly developed science, technology, education, and culture, and where the entire society is well off. Also, both the gap between the different regions of China, as well as that between China and the advanced world, is supposed to be narrowed.

In order to accomplish this, Jiang explained, it will be necessary to make “economic development the central task; all other work is subordinated to and serves this task. Development is the absolute principle. The key to all of China’s problems lies in our own development.”

The Confucian Tradition

Apart from this orientation to the buildup of the physical economy of China, what permeated Jiang’s speech were features of the older traditions of China, pointing out the utmost importance of balancing the reform, development, and stability, with the need to maintain a stable political environment and public order. “Without stability, nothing can be achieved,” he said.

If one compares this emphasis on stability with the wild phases of the Cultural Revolution, then it becomes clear, that the emphasis on “Chinese characteristics” in Deng’s theory means a return to the paradigm of the 2,500-year-old history of Confucian and neo-Confucian values. For thirty years, from 1949 to 1979, China, which had been one of the most conservative cultures in the world, was suddenly supposed to be one of the most revolutionary. Whereas the Cultural Revolution, which was characterized by purge after purge, and the terror unleashed by the Red Guards, left everyone with the experience of a

complete disaster and an economic catastrophe, today, there is a very firm commitment that this should never happen again. The ten years of the Cultural Revolution are generally discarded as a chaotic interval.

It is also important to remember that Confucius’ philosophy was the answer to five hundred years of war, chaos, intrigues, and general barbarism, which dominated the Spring and Autumn Period of 770-475 B.C., and the even worse Period of Warring Kingdoms, from 475-221 B.C., which led to a very profound longing for order and stability—which Confucius put into an elaborated philosophical system.

One of the key notions of Confucian thinking is *li*, which means finding your lawful role in the universe. Self-discipline, through the permanent reactivation of *li*, leads to the adjustment of the *dao* (the way), which defines not only the laws for man, but also the laws of Heaven. This approximates what Nicolaus of Cusa, the founder of modern natural science in the Fifteenth century, means, when he talks about the coincidence of the laws of the microcosm—the mind—and the macrocosm—the physical universe at large.

According to Confucius, if you follow the *li*, you eventually become *junzi*, a noble, a Pole Star, around whom all others rotate. You must uphold within yourself the laws of Heaven and become a Pole Star. Then, you don’t need the army and the law to be heard, because everything will proceed of its own accord.

Three hundred years after Confucius developed his philosophy, which was popularized less than a hundred years later by the great Mencius, it became state philosophy in the Han dynasty, and for more than two thousand years, up until 1911, every official and bureaucrat was trained in Confucian thinking. So, it is as “Chinese,” as the “Christian” aspect of European culture: One does not easily shed the axioms with which generation after generation grew up, for more than two thousand years.

The Renaissance Principle

It is exactly that “Chinese characteristic” which Jiang expressed, when he

demanded “training citizens, so that they have high ideals, moral integrity, a good education, a strong sense of discipline, and develop a national scientific and popular socialist culture geared toward (1) modernization; (2) the world; and (3) the future.”

Contrary to British empiricism or French existentialism, the Confucian belief in the ability to educate man, in his perfectibility, is not only very strong, it is the essence and core of this philosophy. The love for learning that lasts a lifetime, characterizes the image of man of this tradition. Accordingly, the social hierarchy is not determined by birth, but by the degree of knowledge and wisdom of the person. During the Cultural Revolution, the opposite was true: Intellectuals were regarded as reactionaries. It is useful to contrast Jiang Zemin’s perspective with that of Britain’s evil Lord William Rees-Mogg, who thinks it is enough to educate five percent of the population, thereby proposing to go back to feudalism.

Jiang says, that it is important instead to strive to raise the scientific and cultural levels of the whole nation. At the same time, China should carry on the fine traditions handed down from history, and also assimilate the advances of foreign cultures. This is the renaissance principle! This is exactly how the Arabic renaissance of Haroun al-Rashid was accomplished, which combined the best Arabic traditions with the best that Mediterranean culture and science had produced. Similarly, the Italian Renaissance, which created something new out of Italian traditions and the Greek Classics! Uphold the best traditions, but not in a chauvinistic way!

Jiang Zemin then points to the necessity of speeding up and obtaining breakthroughs in the reform process, by relying on scientific and technological progress. In this context, the central and western parts of China are supposed to accelerate the reform, and take advantage of their natural resources to develop appropriate industries. In the “Eurasian Land-Bridge” proposal, Lyndon LaRouche had emphasized exactly this idea, to drive industrial development into the inner regions of China, through infrastructure

development, and then to use the existing natural resources to develop industries for semi-finished as well as advanced industrial products. Jiang pledged, that the state will increase its support for the central and western parts of the country, by giving them priority in planning infrastructure and resource development projects. Also, the government will give active support to the economic development of areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. “We must try all possible means to

as promoting the translation of these achievements into practical productive forces. In this respect, greater importance will be given to the application of the latest technological developments. LaRouche has often advocated such technological “leaps” for developing countries, as crucial for their ability to overcome the gap relative to the developed sector.

Since competent people are the most important resources for scientific and

economic growth of Europe in the past.

While Germany, Sweden, New Zealand, Holland, and the U.S.A.—just to name a few—are right now, in a very dangerous way, dismantling their social institutions, Jiang pledged to build more public and social welfare facilities, and to improve the level of education, and medical and public health care. While Hollywood becomes more Satanic by the day, China intends to eradicate such social evils as pornography, gambling, drug abuse, and drug trafficking.

Eradicating Illiteracy

The next section of Jiang’s report deals with the great role that China’s culture plays in the rejuvenation of the nation. “This culture originated from the 5,000-year-old civilization of the Chinese nation, and is deeply rooted in our endeavor to build socialism with Chinese characteristics,” he said. One could only wish that the German government had had a similar approach toward German Classical culture at the moment of reunification!

Without mentioning Confucius by name, Jiang evoked that tradition, by demanding: “We must nurture citizens, one generation after another, who have high ideals, moral integrity, a good education, and a strong sense of discipline. We must see that education is given a strategic priority. Therefore, nine-year compulsory education will be made universal, and strong efforts will be undertaken to eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people.” Again, one can only hope that these thoughts inspire the relevant authorities, for example, in U.S. cities, where the functional illiteracy rate is sometimes over fifty percent.

Quite contrary to some neo-isolationist tendencies in the U.S., Jiang announced China’s intention to improve its ability to understand the world and to change it. “China cannot develop its culture in isolation from the common achievements of human civilization.” Therefore, it will “conduct various exchanges with other countries, drawing on their strong points, while introducing our own achievements to the world. We must resolutely resist the corrosion of



Presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton, at the White House arrival ceremony, October 29, 1997.

minimize regional disparities, step by step,” Jiang insisted.

I am quite sure that the people of such states as Alabama, Mississippi, or Arkansas would be quite interested in such a perspective for the United States!

Commitment to Technological ‘Leaps’

In the following section of Jiang’s speech, there is an elaboration coherent with what Lyndon LaRouche has called the “Machine-Tool Principle.” Since scientific and technological progress is a primary factor in economic development, Jiang elaborates, China really has to get onto the path of developing its own economy by relying on scientific and technological progress and improving the quality of the workforce, as well

technological progress, as well as for economic and social development, Jiang continued, a whole set of incentive mechanisms to promote the training and utilization of such people will be instituted. This will be supplemented, by bringing in intellectual resources from overseas and importing advanced technologies. All of this is designed to continue to raise the living standards of the people, which Jiang identifies as the fundamental goal of reform. One could only wish that the European governments, afflicted by a suicidal impulse for self-destruction following the Maas-tricht criteria, would study Jiang Zemin’s speech: It may remind some of them of the valid principles of industrial capitalism, which lay the basis for the eco-

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decadent ideas and cultures.” He then referred to the glorious history of Chinese culture, which will enable China to make a contribution to human civilization. These are exactly the ideas that the great German poet Friedrich Schiller expressed in his 1789 address to the students at Jena University, on the subject of universal history, and they also correspond to the vision of the Schiller Institute, about how different cultures will relate to each other in the world, which will soon have eradicated oligarchism.

One Country, Two Systems

There is one section, however, in Jiang Zemin’s speech about the unity of China (one country, two systems), in which he sternly warned foreign forces not to interfere in China’s internal affairs: “However, the growth of the splitting tendency on the island of Taiwan, and the interference of certain foreign anti-Chinese forces have put big obstacles in the way of peaceful reunification. We shall not allow any forces whatsoever to change Taiwan’s status as part of China, in any way. . . . This is not directed against our compatriots in Taiwan, but against the interference of foreign forces with China’s reunification and against the schemes to bring about the ‘independence’ of Taiwan.”

If one considers the victimization of China through colonialism and aggression, one should not be surprised, that China will, under no circumstances, give up what it rightly regards as one of its provinces. The Taiwan issue is, therefore, to be looked at in the same way as the relevant governments would look at the efforts of the Northern League to split off the north of Italy, or the hypothetical cases of independence movements in Bavaria or Alsace. The prospects for a positive relationship with China of almost any country are bright, and it is in the self-interest of the United States, Japan, or the continent of Europe to treat the foreign forces pushing for the independence of Taiwan as a threat to their own interests. One should note in this context, the activities of London’s International Institute of Strategic Studies, and similar outfits.

After affirming China’s commitment to “a just and rational new international political and economic order,” and to the

principle of national sovereignty, Jiang Zemin then stated: “China’s development will not pose a threat to any other country. China will never seek hegemony, even when it becomes developed in the future. The Chinese people, subjected for a long time to aggression, oppression, and humiliation by foreign powers, will never inflict these sufferings upon others. . . . The Chinese people are ready to join hands with the people of other countries in making unremitting efforts to promote the lofty cause of peace and development, and work for a brighter future for mankind.”

People in the United States or other Western countries, who will be inclined to dismiss these noble and uplifting words as mere propaganda, should confront the fact, that there are deeds to prove the words. If one asks, in many African nations, how China is regarded there, one very often hears the answer, that China is the *only* country that, in a unselfish way, is engaged in a true development perspective for Africa. The policy of the West has been, on the contrary, to support the International Monetary Fund policy, which has long since cut off Africa.

Finally, Jiang Zemin stated: “It is of great significance to enter and build a society leading a fairly comfortable life, in such a country as China, with a population of more than 1 billion!” Any human being could not agree more with this view. As the Turkish author Yasar Kemal recently emphasized, when he received the peace prize from the German book trade: “Poverty is the shame of mankind. There should not be one human being suffering from poverty in any system of society.”

If one considers, that in the United States, there are approximately 40 million people below the poverty line; that in India, there are about 500 million people living on roughly \$12 a month, that is already one-tenth of mankind; and if one considers the many poor in Africa, in Ibero-America, and in other Asian countries, then one can only share Jiang’s view. Moreover, one should consider the recent gloating of the *Washington Post*, which called Germany one of the “newly emerging deindustrialized countries,” which formerly had no

impoverished underclass, but which is now developing one.

Pope John Paul II noted during one of his trips to Africa, when he visited the poor huts, with dirt floors and no furniture, that, as long as such oppressive poverty exists, one can not even talk about human rights, when hunger, disease, and short life-expectancy deny the human being a life that can be called human.

Real ‘Human Rights’

From that standpoint, it is absolutely obvious to anyone who is not completely blinded by ideological spectacles, that China is, without any question, the country that has done the most for human rights, by lifting the oppressive poverty for an ever-larger portion of its people. It certainly has done more for human rights than the I.M.F., which has successfully increased the death rate, not only in the Southern Hemisphere, but, notably, Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union. And China has done more, beyond doubt, for human rights, than those China-bashing Republicans, who have done their very best to increase the number of poor in the United States, as well as implementing prison slave-labor camps for export and domestic consumption.

China is on a very promising course of nation-building. Therefore, it is entirely up to the United States, and the West generally, what relations with China will become. But, naturally, China is not spared from the effects of the ongoing collapse of the financial markets, as the recent twenty-five percent one-week loss in Hongkong shows, or the effects on China’s exports to Southeast Asia, all of which is only the beginning of much larger storms to come. Therefore, for the United States and China to join hands, as the core of the reorganization of the international financial system, as Lyndon LaRouche has suggested, will be the only way for the world to avoid total disaster. If such a reorganization occurs, the policy of the Eurasian Land-Bridge can become the center of a global reconstruction program, so that the whole world can share the lofty goals, that Jiang Zemin has outlined for China.

—Helga Zepp LaRouche