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Strengthening the CCP's “Ideological Work”

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What role does ideology play within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? This is a question analysts of Chinese politics have been discussing and debating for decades. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the subsequent rise to power of the more pragmatic and market-tolerant leader Deng Xiaoping, many have assumed that the CCP all but abandoned its ideological convictions in the pursuit of capitalist profit.

We now live in the Xi Jinping era, and there can be no doubt that a grand effort is underway to reimbue the entire political structure with a greater sense of ideological conviction. To better understand precisely what the Party means when it talks about ideology, the Freeman Chair in China Studies will be releasing a series of translations of important but largely ignored speeches, documents, and articles that are openly distributed within CCP circles. The goal of releasing these translations is to provide further context about the CCP's goals, ambitions, and realities for non-Chinese speakers.

The following essay was written by Huang Xianghuai, a senior researcher at the CCP Central Party School, a key institution for developing and disseminating new ideological and political guidelines. This article focuses on “ideological work,” or the Party's efforts to build and maintain a coherence of values and beliefs within the Party ranks in order to strengthen organizational integrity. Huang expounds with great directness some of the key messages the senior Party leadership aims to disseminate amongst lower-level cadres and government officials. In contrast to Beijing's external messaging—which emphasizes peace and cooperation with the United States—internal discourse is imbued with a much darker view of China's relationship with the outside world.

Emphasizing and Strengthening the Party's Ideological Work

重视和加强党的意识形态工作

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Since the [Chinese Communist] Party's 18th National Congress, with the highly strengthened and improved ideological work of the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, conferences have been convened on numerous occasions, including the National Propaganda and Thought Conference, Literary and Art Work Symposium, All-Army Political Work Conference, National Party School Work Conference, Symposium on Philosophy and Social Science, News and Public Opinion Work Conference, Cybersecurity and Informatization Work Conference, and Conference on Ideological and Political Work of National Higher Education. From these symposiums and central conferences, we can see the high degree of emphasis placed on ideological work by the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core.

What is ideology? The original meaning of ideology is “the science of ideas,” and it is a science that studies the underlying laws of cognition and thought. According to the general political science interpretation, “ideology is the expression of beliefs and viewpoints with forms that have symbolic meaning. It uses the representation, interpretation, and evaluation of the real world as methods to form, mobilize, direct, organize, and validate certain behavioral patterns and approaches and negate some other behavioral patterns and approaches.

In the context of Marxism, “ideology, which is also called a conceptual superstructure, includes political and legal thought, ethics, art, religion, philosophy and other ideas and viewpoints,” and “a conceptual superstructure refers to the ideologies of political and legal thought, ethics, religion, philosophy, etc. In addition to this meaning, conceptual superstructures are also called ideological superstructures.”

What are the hallmarks of ideology? [Leon P. Baradat](#) pointed out five characteristics of ideology: First, it is a political term; second, it includes a view of current conditions and a longing for the future; third, it is oriented toward action; fourth, it is oriented toward the masses; and fifth, it is often stated in simple terms that the average person can understand.

I. The Positioning Role of Ideological Work: Ideology Is about the Banners Flown, the Paths Taken, and National Political Security

Ideology determines the direction and development path of cultural progress and is of the utmost importance to the survival and development of a political party, a nation and a people. Ideology is an important component of a nation's superstructure, and ideological construction bears upon what kind of banners the nation flies, what kind of institutions are established, what kind of theories are adhered to, and what kind of paths are taken.

Since the Party's 18th National Congress, the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has greatly emphasized ideological work. It has proposed a series of important statements and significant deployments with regard to directional, fundamental, and overall issues in the ideological field, further clarified the positioning role, target tasks, basic requirements, and main responsibilities of ideological work, and provided scientific guidance for constructing socialist ideology.

(I) DETERMINING THE NATURE: IDEOLOGICAL WORK IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT WORK FOR THE PARTY

Secretary General Xi Jinping [has noted](#): “Being able to do ideological work properly concerns the future fate

of the Party, the long-lasting peace and stability of the country, and the cohesion and solidarity of the nation.” At the same time as energy is concentrated on economic construction, we must not relax or weaken ideological work for a moment.

Marx said, “If one examines from the perspective of ideas, the disintegration of an ideology is sufficient to destroy an entire era.” Comrade Chen Yun put it more plainly: “Doing economic work poorly will capsize the boat; doing ideology poorly will also capsize the boat.” As the U.S. scholar Hans Morgenthau said, “Ideologies, no less than ideas, are weapons that may raise the national morale and, with it, the power of one nation, and in the very act of doing so, may lower the morale of the opponent.” And as National University of Singapore professor Zheng Yongnian has pointed out, “National ideologies are effective means of regulating social groups. Because their interests are different, different social groups may deviate to varying degrees from the national ideology, but their center will always take the core of the national ideology as a reference object. Without the mainstream national ideology, the various social groups would appear extremely selfish, because they regard the ideology they believe in to be the only truth.”

Why is ideology so important? We can understand this by means of a particular topic. For example, deeply and soberly realizing that “socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism, and not some other doctrine,” is a significant ideological issue that “concerns the future fate of the Party, the long-lasting peace and stability of the country, and the cohesion and solidarity of the nation.”

In recent years, some commentary domestically and abroad has raised doubts as to whether or not what China currently practices is still socialism after all. Some people say it is “capital socialism,” while others simply say it is “state capitalism,” or “new bureaucratic capitalism,” and they are all completely wrong.

When China actively absorbs and borrows from the excellent achievements of human society for our use, it is in order to gain comparative advantages over capitalism and take our own path to prosperity, without, however, forgetting our roots or mechanically copying the development models of other countries.

China has not taken a dogmatic attitude toward Marxism, either. It has always put into practice the fundamental principles of scientific socialism on the basis of insistence on combining the rationale of Marxism and scientific socialism with concrete practice, insistence on seeking truth from facts, and insistence on fully understanding the situation in the world, the nation and the Party.

As the report of the Party’s 19th National Congress notes, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, signifying that scientific socialism in twenty-first century China is glowing with a powerful vitality, raising high in the world the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping [has pointed out](#): “The significance of scientific socialism’s success in China is very important for Marxism, scientific socialism, and world socialism.”

Comrade Deng Xiaoping once noted: “Only our development can eventually convince those who do not believe in socialism. If we become comparatively prosperous in this century, their eyes will be partly

opened; and when we have turned China into a moderately developed socialist country by the middle of the next century, we will convince them a great deal further.” Comrade Deng Xiaoping also noted: “As long as Chinese socialism does not fall, socialism will always be able to stand in the world.” This highlights the directional, fundamental and principled nature, and one can see in it the importance of ideology.

(II) DETERMINING THE OBJECTIVES: THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK OF IDEOLOGICAL WORK IS TO REINFORCE THE GUIDING POSITION OF MARXISM IN THE FIELD OF IDEOLOGY, AND REINFORCE THE SHARED INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOLIDARITY OF THE WHOLE PARTY AND ALL NATIONALITIES

As General Secretary Xi Jinping noted in the [report of the Party’s 19th National Congress](#), “Ideology determines the direction and development path of cultural progress.” We must advance the Sinicization, modernization and popularization of Marxism, construct socialism with a strong cohesive and leading force, and bring the beliefs of the whole people closely together in terms of ideals, values and ethics.

We must deeply recognize that Marxism is the fundamental guiding ideology in the founding of our Party and country, and based on the issue of insistence upon the guiding position of Marxism we must be steadfast and not permit the slightest wavering at any time and under any circumstances.

Firmly holding up ideals and adhering to the spiritual pursuits of communists has always been at the very root of a communist’s life and purpose. Ideals are the “calcium” of a communist’s spirit. Without ideals, or when ideals are not firmly upheld, one will be spiritually “calcium deficient” and be liable to contract “rickets,” and then you will sway to and fro in the face of a storm. As facts have shown time and again, swaying in one’s ideals is the most dangerous sort of swaying. The slippery slope of ideals is the most dangerous kind.

What are the consequences of wavering ideals? The book [Revolution From Above: The Demise of the Soviet System](#) demonstrated: The first major changes after Gorbachev came to power did not take place in the economic sphere, but occurred instead in the cultural sphere and in the realm of ideas about personal rights and freedoms. As one scholar has noted, “The nature of the Soviet Union’s disintegration was a collapse of the leadership class’s ideology. The citizenry and leaders of the Soviet state all followed the official ideology, and because the degree of correlation between the old institutions and ideology of socialist countries was great, the leadership class’s ideology also collapsed along with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The *Reader Series on Important Speeches of General Secretary Xi Jinping (2016 Version)* points out:

Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate? Why did the Soviet Communist Party collapse? One important reason was that the ideological struggle was very intense, and with the complete repudiation of Soviet Union history and the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the repudiation of Lenin and Stalin, and engagement in historical nihilism, thought became all confused. The various party organizations had practically no purpose, and none of the armed forces were under the party’s leadership. In the end, the Soviet Communist Party that had been such a big party just came crashing down, and the Soviet Union that had been such a big socialist country just fell to pieces. This is a cautionary tale!

As to the ideological lessons drawn from the Soviet Union’s disintegration, on one hand, one sees self-imposed mental disarmament, a danger brought on by engaging in “differentiation”; on the other hand, one also sees self-imposed mental isolation, a danger brought on by “rigidification.”

Ideological work is essentially political work. The biggest political power lies in winning people’s hearts, and coalescing people’s hearts must be taken as the starting point and landing point for ideological work,

insisting on a people-centered work orientation, in the service of the Party's central work, and in the service of upholding the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. We must enhance and improve positive propaganda, strengthen its attractiveness and infectiousness, and build up a powerful positive ideology and public opinion.

(III) DETERMINING THE METHODS: IN IDEOLOGICAL WORK, BEING CENTRALLY FOCUSED AND SERVING THE OVERALL SITUATION MUST BE TAKEN AS FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES, AND WE MUST EMBRACE THE OVERALL SITUATION, GRASP THE GENERAL TREND, AND FOCUS ON THE BIG THINGS, CORRECTLY LOCATING THE ENTRY POINTS AND FOCAL POINTS OF WORK, ACHIEVING ACTION ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES, AND RESPONDING TO SITUATIONS AND ACTING ACCORDINGLY

The new era of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics requires both hard power and soft power, and we must both do central work effectively, providing a solid material foundation for ideological work, and also do ideological work effectively, providing strong support for central work. We must take a firm political stance, steadfastly publicize the Party's theory, line, and policies, as well as the central government's major work deployments and its major analyses and judgments, and we must resolutely maintain a high degree of consistency with the Party Central Committee and resolutely uphold the Party Central Committee's authority. We must insist on Party control of propaganda, ideology, and the media. We must not only speak about Party principles, but must also speak of them with conviction, and we cannot go around dodging and squirming.¹

One must see a consolidation of the mass base and the ruling base. We cannot just say things will be fine as long as the material life of the masses is good, since problems will still arise in the end if the mass base is lost in spirit. The disintegration of a regime often begins in the realm of ideas. Political upheaval and regime change may occur overnight, but the evolution of ideas is a long-term process, and when the line on thought is breached, other lines of defense are hard to hold.

Looking at the relationship between the economic foundation and the superstructure, materialist dialectics² holds that the economic foundation plays a determining role with regard to the superstructure, and at the same time the superstructure plays a reactive role with regard to the economic foundation. We must deeply recognize the determining role that the economic foundation plays on the superstructure and deeply recognize the reactive role the superstructure plays on the economic foundation. We must have both hard power and soft power, and we must do central work effectively, providing a solid material foundation for ideological work, and also do ideological work effectively, providing strong support for central work. We can neither neglect ideological work for the sake of central work, nor allow ideological work to drift away from central work.

As Renmin University of China professor Yang Guangbin points out, the "world" is not a mere material construct, but is rather a conceptual one, a "conceptual mirror image." What this "world" is like hinges on which perspective people look at it from and on what concepts people use to analyze it. There is no power greater than the kind of power that can manipulate people's concepts, thinking, and intentions. Factoring in the current realities of Chinese state power, Yang Guangbin notes that the transformation and upgrad-

1. In February 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping visited China's top three State-run media outlets and told the employees "all the work by the Party's media must reflect the Party's will, safeguard the Party's authority, and safeguard the Party's unity." Media organs, according to Xi, "must love the Party, protect the Party, and closely align themselves with the Party leadership in thought, politics and action."

2. Marxist theory draws from and innovates upon Hegelian dialectics. It focuses on the contradiction between two ideas (a thesis and antithesis) and their ensuing resolution (synthesis). Here, the writer is focusing on the contradiction between the economic base and the ideological superstructure formed under it and stating that the two play off each other. Eschewing a future synthesis, the writer seems to be suggesting that these two forces must be balanced to ensure stability and steady progress.

ing of China's economic structure will further elevate its economic power, and its military power, with the Party in command of the guns, is unequaled. Its political power centered around party control of cadres is in need of improvement, but the superiority of its people's democracy is beyond doubt, while in terms of ideological power, i.e., the right of discourse, there is a serious mismatch with China. This is the current state of its ideological power.

If we liken national power to a tabletop, the four legs supporting that table are economic power, military power, ideological power, and political power.

Among those, the "short leg" is undoubtedly ideological power.

(IV) DETERMINING THE FOUNDATION: THE KEYS TO DOING IDEOLOGICAL WORK WELL LIE WITH THE PARTY AND PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AT ALL LEVELS. WE MUST INSIST ON THE ENTIRE PARTY TAKING ACTION TO GRASP IDEOLOGICAL WORK. PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AT ALL LEVELS MUST PUT INTO PRACTICE THE IDEOLOGICAL WORK RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM, TAKING A CLEAR STAND IN SUPPORT OF CORRECT THINKING AND SPEECH, AND A CLEAR STAND AGAINST ALL KINDS OF ERRONEOUS IDEAS.

There can be absolutely no equivocation on questions of right and wrong, or on questions of political principles, nor can there be any retreat. We must adopt a battle stance and take up the burdens of warriors, dare to grasp and wield control, and to show the sword. We must not engage in "fence sitting" or "watching which way the wind blows" and cannot engage in any "polishing one's own reputation." The main comrades in charge of Party committees must take the lead in grasping ideological work, taking a clear stand on the front lines of ideological work, and they must put the leadership power in ideological work firmly in the hands of those who are loyal to the Party and the people.

For example, for the overall goal we have proposed of a nation governed comprehensively by the rule of law, as our banner clearly states, we must not have the slightest wavering in our insistence on socialist rule of law as its nature and direction, nor the slightest wavering in our insistence on taking the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. There does not exist in the world any settled and authoritative rule of law model, nor does there exist a universally applicable path to the rule of law. Our foundation for ruling the country and governing is the Communist Party's leadership and the socialist system. By being explicit on this basic issue, we can then effectively resist such westernized ideas on the rule of law such as "Western constitutional government," "separation of powers," "judicial independence," and "multi-party politics," ensuring that the nation under comprehensive rule of law will always stride forward in the right direction.

The relationship between Party and law is a major political question, and as General Secretary Xi Jinping has aptly observed, "which is superior, the Party or the law," is a political trap and a false proposition. The ruling of the country according to the constitution and governing according to the constitution that we insist upon is different from so-called "constitutional government" in the West. Anyone can use any excuse to deny the leadership of the CCP and China's socialist system. They are all wrong, harmful, and in violation of the constitution, and they are all absolutely unacceptable.

From the relevant provisions of *Some Guidelines on the Political Life within the Party under the New Situation*, one can see the degree of importance that the Party Central Committee attaches to ideological issues. The *Guidelines* point out that:

the examination and identification of cadres, especially senior cadres, must be based first and foremost on whether they unswervingly implement the Party's basic line. On questions of right and wrong, party members and cadres, especially senior cadres, cannot have an ambiguous attitude. They must not waver on the basic political stance, and must not be swayed by erroneous statements. When the people's interests are harmed, when the image of the Party and the State are damaged, or when the Party's ruling position is threatened, one must step forward with a clear stance and take the initiative to wage the struggle resolutely. We shall have no use for those who are politically disqualified, such as those who, on issues of right and wrong, take no position, have no attitude, or are aloof or indifferent, or for those who fail to resist and struggle in the face of wrong words or deeds, putting their own safety before that of others and playing the nice guy; while those who are already in leadership positions must be resolutely adjusted, and dealt with sternly in serious cases.

II. Circumstances in the Ideological Sphere: Problems Still exist, the Situation Is Still Complex, and the Challenges Are Still Severe

A special study of 2,000 leading cadres, completed by scholars before the Party's 18th National Congress, found that problems with unilateral emphasis on economic construction and disregard for ideological work exist in many places, departments, and units, and such problems are even severe in some of those places, departments, and units. This kind of belittling, neglect, or ridiculing of ideology has been summarized by some expert scholars with the phrase "the three smiles": "a cold smile when hearing about Marxism, a faint smile when hearing about socialism with Chinese characteristics, and laughter with a smile when hearing about communism." It must be said that this situation has been turned around to a considerable degree since the Party's 18th National Congress.

(I) SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN IDEOLOGICAL WORK

Since the Party's 18th National Congress, the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has been ramping up efforts in ideological work, having established and improved the responsibility system for ideological work, included implementation of the responsibility system by Party committees (Party organizations) in inspection tour work, strengthened position management for propaganda and public opinion, and strengthened supervision of internet public opinion, daring to show the sword and fight against wrong thinking, and resolutely curbing the hyping and spreading of wrong thinking, so that the main ideological themes are more resonant, the positive energy is stronger, and cultural self-confidence is shown clearly.

A series of major undertakings and major accomplishments has greatly strengthened the Party's powers of leadership, initiative, and discourse in the realm of ideology. This has greatly compressed the space in which the disinformation, gossip, and noise of misconceptions and hostile forces exist and effectively turned around the passive situation that had appeared in the ideological arena. Upward momentum has been maintained in the ideological realm overall, the core values of socialism have deeply entered people's hearts, excellent Chinese traditional culture has been widely promoted, management and operation of internet construction have improved steadily, the nation's cultural soft power and the influence of Chinese culture have increased greatly, and the ideological solidarity and unity of the entire Party and society have been further consolidated.

(II) THE IDEOLOGICAL REALM REMAINS UNSETTLED

At the same time, it must be recognized that the situation faced in the ideological field remains tangled

and complex, the risks and challenges faced remain grave, and the ideological struggles and rivalries are at times very acute.

First, social ideologies are complex, diverse and interwoven. China's profound economic and social transformation, together with the profound alteration of interest patterns, has made the trend toward greater diversification and change in the ideological situation ever more evident. People's thinking has become more dynamic, with significantly greater independence, selectivity, variability, and differentiation. A diversity of ideas and of forces all competing to be heard has become the norm. Some mistaken ideological viewpoints, especially Western "constitutional democracy," neoliberalism, historical nihilism, and so on, still lie waiting for opportunities to crop up and attempt to challenge the guiding role of Marxism, attack and deny the Party's leadership and China's system of government and development path, and struggle to gain the power of discourse on ideology. The mutual exchanges and encounters among diverse ideas and cultures in the ideological sphere have become an objective reality. The trend toward long-term coexistence of the mainstream ideology with a diversity of social thought, and their mutual agitation, has become more pronounced, so the task of leading social thought and consolidating a consensus of ideas is a formidable one.

The Survey Center of People's Tribune selected the top 10 ideas in China and abroad for six consecutive years, from 2010 to 2015. On that list, neoliberalism, "universal values," historical nihilism, and Western "constitutional democracy" are ideas that appeared year after year, or even topped the list. Looking at these social ideas, the focal issues they revolve around are none other than how to view Chinese traditional culture, China's modern history of revolution, and the history of reform and opening up, and how to assess China's path, but these questions are all directly related to the direction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In the case of the debate over the direction of reform, it has clearly highlighted the complexity of social ideology. As General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out, the overall goal for comprehensively deepening reform is to perfect and develop the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and push forward the modernization of the State's governance system and governance capabilities. The two phrases are a united whole, with the former stipulating the fundamental orientation, while the latter stipulates the clear direction for improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics under the guidance of the fundamental orientation. Reform is reform that is constantly moving forward on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, taking neither the closed and rigid paths of the past, nor going astray under a changed banner. The constant pushing forward of reform is done to better advance the cause of the Party and the people, not to cater to the "applause" of some people. We cannot apply Western theories and viewpoints mechanically to ourselves. Not implementing reform and opening up is a dead end, but engaging in "reform and opening up" that negates its socialist orientation is even more of a dead end. Some things cannot be changed and will not change even after a long time, and subversive errors must never arise on the fundamental issues. On fundamental issues involving the path, theory, system, culture, etc., facing matters of right and wrong, we must take a resolute stand under a clear banner, with no speaking in ambiguities, no covering things up.

Viewed from a political economy perspective, the foundation of supply-side structural reform is for China's supply capacity to better meet the ever-growing demand of the overwhelming majority of people for better lives, thereby achieving the goal of socialist production. While supply-side structural reform cannot be viewed as a replica of the Western supply-side school, it is even more necessary to prevent some people from using their interpretation to proclaim "neoliberalism." Markets play a decisive role in the allocation of resources, but they do not do everything, and it does not mean government has nothing to

do. Rather, it must insist on what is and is not done, focusing on improving macro-control and scientific management. As General Secretary Xi Jinping has noted: “For government to play its role better, it is not necessary for government to play a greater role; instead, while ensuring that the market plays a decisive role, government must regulate those things that markets cannot or do not regulate.”

Second, the encounter between mainstream social values and the profit-seeking nature of markets poses challenges. Developing the socialist market economy helps to liberate and develop the society’s productive forces, strengthen the country’s overall national power, and increase the people’s living standards. It also helps to strengthen the people’s awareness of self-reliance, competition, and efficiency; their awareness of democracy and the rule of law; and their pioneering innovative spirit, further bringing out socialism’s superiority. It must be recognized, however, that markets have their own weaknesses and negative aspects, and that concepts such as the principle of equal exchange are inevitably reflected in and enter into the spiritual life of the people, even penetrating life within the Party. Socialism, collectivism, and patriotism are coming under new challenges. Money worship, hedonism, and extreme individualism have grown and spread to a certain extent. Behavioral phenomena such as moral failure, indecency, and vulgarity of all kinds repeatedly breach the minimum standards of public order and decency, generating negative effects on the promotion of the mainstream thinking, ethics, and values of the society.

Third, profound changes are taking place in the media situation and the public opinion ecosystem. With the rapid development of new media—international and domestic, online and offline, virtual and real, within the system and outside the system, etc.—the lines are becoming blurred, constituting an increasingly complex forum of public opinion characterized by its spontaneity, suddenness, openness, diversity, conflict, anonymity, unboundedness, uncontrollability. The dominant role of mainstream media has suffered a huge blow, and the internet frequently becomes a source and amplifier for fomenting negative public opinion and spreading false ideas, greatly increasing the difficulty of guiding public opinion and controlling content. The proper management and use of the internet is critical for firmly mastering news and public opinion in the New Situation.³ To firmly maintain internet ideology dominance is to protect the sovereignty and authority of the State.

Looking at what some other countries have encountered, new media played a role in the “Color Revolutions” that cannot be ignored. In the “Color Revolutions,” the mainstream media in those countries fundamentally lost the ability to lead. People found it hard to hear the authoritative voices of their governments, leaving the population’s thinking confused and disoriented. So-called “independent media” used a variety of means to vilify the ruling authorities and incite popular discontent.

Last, various hostile forces are tightening their pervasive containment of China. We shall insist on the leadership of the CCP, and insist on the socialist system. The closer we get to the goal of national rejuvenation, the closer we get to the center of the world stage, and the various kinds of pervasive containment facing China’s path, theory, system, and culture will not stop. Therefore, the task of protecting China’s ideological security and political security is a very heavy one.

3. The “new situation” (新形势) generally refers to the rapid changes occurring in the global environment. At a speech delivered to the Plenary Session of the 23rd St. Petersburg Forum, Xi Jinping noted that “The world today is undergoing major changes unseen in a century. The rise of emerging market countries and developing countries is unprecedentedly fast, the metabolism and fierce competition brought about by the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation are unprecedented, and the inadaptability and asymmetry of the global governance system and the changes in the international situation are unprecedented.”

The National Endowment for Democracy in the United States published a report in 2017 entitled, *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence*. Over 150 pages long, this report accuses China and Russia of using “solicitation,” “manipulation,” and “distraction,” among other means, to launch an orchestrated “information war” against the media, academia, culture, and think tanks in some emerging democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe, comparing the normal public diplomacy activities of China and Russia to the “knife point” and “tip of the needle” for attacking Western democratic values.

In December 2016, the Ministry of Public Security released a video entitled *Who Wants to Topple China the Most*. The video opens by introducing Yusra Mardini, an 18-year-old Olympic swimmer from Syria, who says she represents “refugees who lost their homes to ‘color revolutions,’” and notes that “‘color revolutions’ have succeeded in causing many countries to descend into war and division, and the devil’s claws are also extending toward China.” This is followed by footage of human rights activists, as well as human rights lawyers being arrested and pleading guilty, revealing that someone stirs up mass events which serve as the fuses for igniting “color revolutions,” and that “foreign non-governmental organizations are used to cultivate ‘agents’ to build the social foundations for ‘color revolutions.’” At the end, the subtitles in the video read: “We suffered enough from the torments of war and poverty in the past. Today’s prosperity comes from the sacrifices and untiring efforts of several generations of people,” and appeals to citizens, saying that “resisting ‘color revolution’ is everyone’s responsibility.”

Fudan University professor Zhang Weiwei points out that, in terms of “soft power” directed against China, the United States primarily employs two methods: “internal checks and balances” and “discourse checks and balances.” So-called “discourse checks and balances” refers to where Western discourse is used as a weapon, constantly planting issues that break down the psychological defenses of Chinese people and discourse that deceives the Chinese public, in the hopes of ultimately achieving some kind of “color revolution” that will cause China to descend into chaos and even disintegrate, and thereby conquer without fighting.

From a scholarly research perspective, “discourse checks and balances” also have a more deep-seated manifestation. For example, Western theories are used to manufacture the so-called problems that exist in China, then Western theories are used in logical deduction to come up with methods for solving China’s problems, or even to propose policy recommendations. With this approach, many very standardized and beautiful dissertations can be written, but they are of no help for truly solving China’s problems. As another example, the real-life problems that China has in reality are made academic and theoretical, while the reality is kicked away, in order to engage in pure logical deduction, thereby turning the academic research into a kind of outwardly elegant “intellectual game” for one’s own gratification. The result of this is that many people, though smart and hardworking, nonetheless fall into the discourse trap and find it hard to escape, or even find it personally gratifying. Some scholars say, when we want to use theory to discuss things, if you think about it, of all the concepts and categories that can have real meaning or can be applied universally, how many are not thoroughly westernized (assuming they are not directly copied). If we use someone else’s language to say things, what things can be considered China’s own? Theories that are not directed at China’s problems, and do not grow out of China’s problems, are theories without roots. One must understand that theories have to solve problems, and the relationship between problems and theories is vertical. This is just like saying trees must have roots. The problems are the roots, and the theories are the trees; theories grow out of problems.

Facing the tangled and complex situation in the ideological sphere, some shortcomings and weaknesses still exist in the construction of socialist ideology. Confronting the disruption of “chaotic flowers that gradually attract one’s eyes,” we must maintain our political resolve to “remain calm in the midst of

chaos” so that we may lead more strongly and act more effectively. We must resolutely implement and execute the ideological work responsibility system, focusing on doing a good job of “steady expectations, steady thinking and steady public sentiment.” We must continue to strengthen socialist ideology construction, keep the ideological realm in a good state, consolidate and expand our ideological battleground position, better serve the central work of the Party and the nation, and better unify minds, unite souls, and concentrate strength.

On the political development path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we must maintain our political resolve from start to finish. If the political resolve is inadequate, or if political confidence is insufficient, and we go in the wrong direction, not only will it be hard to succeed at building the political culture, it will also bring harm to the cause of the Party and the people. “An orange grown in the south is an orange, but in the north it grows into something different.” We need to learn from the positive outcomes of political cultures abroad, but we must not abandon the foundation of China’s political system.

III. The Basic Requirements of Ideological Work: Insist on and Strengthen the Party’s Comprehensive Leadership in Ideological Work and Constantly Reinforce Its Dominance and Discourse Power in the Realm of Ideology.

To do ideological work well in the new era, we must insist on and strengthen the Party’s comprehensive leadership in ideological work, grasp the power of leadership over ideological work firmly in our hands; better consolidate and develop mainstream ideology; constantly reinforce dominance and discourse power in the realm of ideology; constantly and steadfastly expand the confidence of cadres and the masses in the path, the theory, the system, and the culture; and constantly boost the cohesion and centripetal force of the Party, the State, and the nation.

(I) FIRMLY GRASP THE CORRECT DIRECTION OF IDEOLOGICAL WORK

In building socialist ideology, the stance and direction are vitally important. If the stance wavers, the direction will be off, and that will create big problems. We must always keep this political string taut and firmly establish political consciousness, situational consciousness, core consciousness, and alignment consciousness. When it comes to political stance, political direction, political principles, and political path, we must maintain a high degree of consistency with the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, using practical actions to uphold the core position of General Secretary Xi Jinping and uphold the Party Central Committee’s authority and its centralized and unified leadership. We must, under a clear banner, insist on the Party’s control of propaganda, ideology, and the media; insist on having state-run newspapers, journals, platforms, and news websites; and stand firm on the political direction, public opinion orientation, and value orientation. Whether it is broadcast television and news publishing units, or social science theory, and arts and culture units, and whether it is traditional media or new media, they must all consciously place themselves under the leadership of the Party and consciously use a ruler to measure all the way, properly transmitting the Party’s voice and propositions, and on no account allowing “special members” or “public opinion enclaves.”

The Party principle is the fundamental principle of the Party’s news and public opinion work. The most fundamental thing for insisting on the Party principle is insisting on the Party’s leadership of news and public opinion work. However the times develop, and however media patterns change, the principle and system of Party control of the media will not change. Media under the auspices of the Party and the government must be grasped firmly in the Party’s hands and must become the mouthpiece of the Party and the people.

The view of journalism is the soul of news and public opinion work. The Marxist view of journalism is the essential embodiment of the Marxist standpoint, perspective, and method in news and public opinion work and is the “guiding star” for doing the Party’s news and public opinion work properly. We must clearly recognize the essence of the West’s so-called “freedom of the press” and consciously resist the influence of wrong views such as the Western view of journalism, and we must act as transmitters of the Party’s policy propositions, chroniclers of the times, promoters of social progress, and sentinels of equity and justice.

(II) INSIST ON TIRELESSLY USING XI JINPING THOUGHT ON SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE NEW ERA TO ARM THE ENTIRE PARTY

The most important thing for mastering the power of leadership over ideological work lies in strengthening the theoretical armament, promoting the permeation in people’s hearts of Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics. The fundamental reason for using Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics lies in the fact that this thought is the backbone and guiding star for following the new era’s Long March path. From an ideological perspective, an important part of the background for the formation of Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics is that scientific socialism has taken on new life, and the contest between the two social systems has shown a new momentum.

In 500 years, world socialism has gone from fantasy to science, from theory to practice, and from the practice of a single country to development in multiple countries, reflecting persistent pursuit of a beautiful social system, and profoundly altering the course of world history’s development. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the breakup of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the upheaval in Eastern Europe, world socialism suffered a severe setback. As the so-called “wave of democratization” swept across the world, some proclaimed that “history had ended” with the capitalist system, and that “the 20th century will culminate in the failure of socialism and the victory of capitalism,” while others falsely claimed that socialism would also fall, in keeping with the domino effect. Over 20 years have passed, and today we can safely say that China has not only held up the socialist banner firmly and steadily, but has also pushed scientific socialism on to a brand new phase. With China’s flourishing development, the influence and inspirational power of socialism have strengthened substantially. People are witnessing the end of the “end of history” theory, the collapse of the “collapse of China” theory, and the failure of the “failure of socialism” theory.

The formation and development of Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics, and its lively practice guiding the cause of the Party and the state as they underwent historic transformations and achieved historic accomplishments, have made the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics broader the longer it is traveled. This is causing growing numbers of people in the world to squarely face and believe in Marxism and socialism and causing a profound transformation beneficial to Marxism and socialism to occur in the historical evolution of the two worldwide ideologies and social systems, and the contest between them.

The basic requirement for using Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics to arm the entire Party is to follow the requirements of understanding thoroughly and implementing in practice, insist on reading the works, studying the original texts, and understanding the original principles, with in-depth, systematic learning and learning by promptly following up, and being able to integrate learning, thinking, and use, and unite knowledge, belief, and action. For overall theoretical study, propaganda and research work, we shall deeply research, publicize and interpret the contemporary background, historical position, scientific system, rich content, and spiritual substance of Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics. We shall constantly deepen our understanding of the theoretical character, intellectual lineage, and practical value of this thought, and insist on tirelessly using Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese character-

istics to arm the minds of cadres and the masses, and we will succeed at getting it into enterprises, schools, government institutions, villages, neighborhoods, the military, and the internet, truly using it to guide the entire Party and all the country's nationalities in their constant advance.

(III) VIGOROUSLY PROMOTE CONSTRUCTION AND INNOVATION OF THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Given the profound changes in the domestic and foreign situations and the rapid development of information technology, doing ideological work well needs innovation more than at any time in the past. It is necessary to have a good grasp of innovation in ideas, means, methods, and approaches, actively explore new initiatives and approaches that help resolve work problems, make thorough use of new technologies and new applications to innovate new media communication methods, and seize the high ground in information dissemination. We must insist on the correct public opinion orientation; adapt to the profound transformation in the forms and patterns of dissemination under the new situation; promote the in-depth integration of traditional and new media; increase our news and public opinion power in terms of dissemination, guidance, influence, and credibility; and push for a greater boost in China's overall dissemination capabilities.

As General Secretary Xi Jinping has stressed, backwardness will lead to a beating, being poor means going hungry, and losing one's voice will result in a scolding. The overall pattern of international public opinion is that the West is strong, and we are weak. We often have good reasons but can't express them or express them but cannot transmit them. This shows that development advantages and overall strength have still not been converted into discourse advantages. We must innovate in methods of expressing ourselves externally; study the habits and characteristics of different audiences abroad; employ concepts, categories, and expressions that integrate Chinese and foreign; combine what we want to say with what overseas audiences want to hear; combine "stating feelings" with "giving reasons"; and combine "speaking for ourselves" with "what others say," focusing on telling well China's story, the CCP's story, the story of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the story of the Chinese people so that China's story is more relatable to the international community and overseas audiences

What message does *Wolf Warrior 2* have for mainstream ideological dissemination? Find the best combination of mainstream ideological expressions and commercial expressions. Ideology can only truly become a spiritual force in people's lives when it is directed toward the masses and permeates life. Looking at the practical experience of recent years in promoting Marxism among the masses, the language of ideology has grown increasingly fresh and down to earth. In macro-level, rational government working papers, we have seen sentimental language like "looking at the mountains, seeing the waters, and remembering our nostalgia." In New Year's greetings, we have seen internet language such as "working our . . . off," "click on 'like'," "friend circle," and "the world is so big . . . ," etc. In speeches during visits, we have seen such sentimental and plain language as the "community of common destiny" and "this lion that is China has awoken, but it's a peaceful, friendly and civilized lion." Behind such language lies a precise reflection of confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

(IV) STRICTLY IMPLEMENT THE IDEOLOGICAL WORK RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM

To do ideological work well, we must insist on Party-wide action. Political responsibility and leadership responsibility for doing ideological work well must be tightened and consolidated, and the ideological work responsibility system must be comprehensively implemented. We must strengthen position-building and management, conscientiously implement the principles of competent authority and territorial management, and effectively ensure people are responsible for protecting their territory, bear responsibility for protecting the territory, and implement responsibility for protecting the territory so that the various ideo-

logical positions always become strong positions for the dissemination of advanced thought and culture, and never providing channels for dissemination of wrong ideological viewpoints.

Ideological work accountability can play important education and warning roles. In September 2016, the Central Propaganda Department issued nationwide the *Notice Concerning the Hubei Provincial Party Committee's Strict Handling of Prominent Problems in the Central Group Study of Enshi Prefectural Party Committee and Lichuan Municipal Party Committee*, which Party committees at the county level and above were required to study specifically. This is just one typical example of accountability.

At present, there exist three kinds of “zones” in the field of ideology and public opinion—red, black, and gray. The red zones our main battlefront positions, which we must hold onto and never lose; the black zones consist mainly of negative things, which must be resolutely controlled, greatly compressing their territory, and gradually pushing them to change color; and the gray zones must be fought over with great fanfare, accelerating their conversion into red zones, and preventing their metamorphosis into black zones. We must carry forward the fighting spirit, always standing on the front lines of the ideological struggle, daring to grasp and wield control, and daring to show the sword, and waging a relentless struggle against wrong words and deeds that deny the Party's leadership or deny the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out, for those who violate the four cardinal principles, the localities and units where they are located must manage them effectively. They must not allow such people to waltz around starting rumors, fishing in troubled waters, stirring up trouble, and talking nonsense. The ideological field is highly sensitive and highly focused, and in management and guidance, one must pay attention to effective timing, making sure to get the timing, tempo, intensity, and scope right, and being particular about the ways and methods. We must correctly distinguish and handle problems of political principle, ideological understanding, and academic viewpoint, but regardless of the problem we are handling, it must contribute to upholding and strengthening the Party's leadership, contribute to the cohesion of the hearts and minds of the Party and the people, and contribute to the promotion of reform, development and stability.

(V) BUILD A HIGH-QUALITY TEAM OF IDEOLOGY TALENTS

Doing ideological work well all comes down to talent. Everything depends on the team. We must set strict requirements with the standards of statesmen, improve quality with the standards of specialists, and advance the work with the standards of achievers. We must select the right people for the leadership teams of propaganda and ideology departments, ensuring that leadership power in propaganda and ideology work is grasped firmly in the hands of those who are loyal to the Party and the people. Leading cadres of propaganda and ideology departments at all levels must strengthen both study and putting into practice, and truly become experts in the art of convincing people, with several “tricks up their sleeves,” in theory, writing, eloquence or other strengths. We must attach great importance to doing work on intellectuals well, strengthen solidarity and guidance, enhance political leadership and political absorption, and rally them around the Party to the maximum extent.

On the whole, the CCP's attitude on ideological work is clear: First, it is sober-minded and firm; second, it is open and inclusive. Our party has suffered losses both from overemphasizing ideology and from neglecting ideology. Therefore, we must “reside in the vast house of the world, stand in our proper place in the world, and walk the great path of the world,” unbiased and impartial, neither “left” nor “right,” with actions suited to each situation, gaining wide acceptance, accommodating special cases, attaching importance to both underlying principles and practical means, extending and retracting at will, focusing on construction, daring to show the sword, and able to handle anything with confidence as long as righteousness is in our hearts.

What the CCP must avoid is: emphasizing ideological work when the windstorms are raging but neglecting ideological work when all is calm. Unsurprisingly, the storms are often the result of neglecting ideological work, while the calm periods are often directly related to ideological effectiveness. The conclusion is: Whether it is stormy or calm, importance should always be attached to ideological work.

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