

Xi Jinping and the Party's "Guiding Ideology"

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As the 19th Party Congress approaches, there is widespread speculation that the party constitution will be revised to incorporate concepts associated with General Secretary Xi Jinping as part of the party's authoritative "guiding ideology." Although such a revision is possible, analysis of changes in past constitutions and available evidence from PRC media suggest a more limited outcome.

Although speculation about revision of the constitution of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by the 19th Party Congress has percolated among observers in the Hong Kong and foreign press for a long time, it took off when the independent Hong Kong newspaper *Ming Pao* published a report on 2 April 2017 stating that "information from Beijing" had disclosed that the 19th Party Congress will amend the party constitution to incorporate "Xi Jinping Thought" (习近平思想). The overseas Chinese website Duowei subsequently published a photo of a slide presented at a National Administration College occasion listing the "principal contents of Xi Jinpingism" (习近平主义的主要内容). And attention thereafter focused on a long article by State Councilor Yang Jiechi—published on 16 July in the party's political journal *Seeking Truth* (求是)—that assessed "General Secretary Xi Jinping's foreign affairs thought" (习近平总书记外事思想), a recent example of references occasionally appearing in PRC media over a long period to Xi's "thought" with respect to a specific policy sector.

These references heightened speculation that revision of the party constitution at the upcoming party congress would substantially enhance Xi's authority by incorporating some formulation associated with Xi as a new element of the party's "guiding ideology" (指导思想). Such a change may come with his name attached, as in the examples cited above of "Xi Jinping Thought" and "Xi Jinpingism," or without it. In either case, the revision would confirm Xi Jinping's consolidation of supreme power because no previous top party leader since Mao has managed to put his stamp on the party's prevailing ideology as enunciated in the party's foundational document until stepping down.

If preparations for convening the 19th Congress are following the same procedures used to convene party congresses in recent decades, revision of the CCP constitution should be well along.¹ A drafting committee will have been formed in December last year or January this year, and the Politburo and its Standing Committee will have already seen preliminary drafts. The recently closed leadership retreat at Beidaihe likely reviewed a draft, which ultimately must be finalized for approval by the Politburo, probably in late September, for forwarding to the 18th Central Committee's Seventh Plenum and ultimately to the party congress.²

Past Revisions of the Party's Constitution

Every party congress has revised the party constitution since the Second CCP Congress first adopted it in 1922. Successive revisions have addressed changes in virtually all provisions of the party's foundational document at one time or another, and in some cases rewritten the document altogether, as was the case in 1969 and in 1982.

As the appendix shows, the first party constitution to spell out the party's "guiding ideology" was adopted by the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, when the new constitution stipulated: "the CCP takes the thought that integrates the theories of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of the Chinese revolution—Mao Zedong Thought—as the guiding principles in all its work." This declaration followed directly from Mao's decisive victory over leadership antagonists in the 1942–43 rectification campaign and his consolidation of power, reflected in his new title as party chairman, a post established for him in 1943.

Every party constitution adopted since 1945 has included a statement of the party's guiding principles, which on several occasions has been adjusted to reflect prevailing political shifts and ideological trends.

- At the Eighth Party Congress in 1956, the CCP declared simply that it took "Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action"—dropping the reference in the 1945 document to Mao Zedong Thought. Western observers have long diverged over the impetus for this change. Some have argued that the excision of Mao's Thought came at Mao's expense in an emerging leadership split, while others have seen the change as consistent with Beijing's effort to accommodate the de-Stalinization movement launched by Nikita Khrushchev at the Soviets' 20th Party Congress in February 1956.³
- At the Ninth Congress in April 1969, the party constitution declared that "the CCP takes Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought as the theoretical foundation of its guiding ideology," disaggregating Marxism-Leninism into separate elements. This change effectively elevated Mao's ideological views to a stature comparable to Marx's and Lenin's. This leveling of the pantheon was consistent with the assertion in the sentence that followed of the universal significance of Mao's ideological views in international communism (see Appendix).
- The party constitution adopted at the 12th Congress in 1982 combined the guiding ideology formulations of the 1945 and 1956 constitutions, stating that "the Chinese Communist Party takes Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as its guide to action." This revision was in step with the judgment in the party's 1981 resolution on CCP history that interpreted Mao Zedong Thought as the unique adaptation of Marxism-Leninism's universal principles to the specific context of revolution in China, a task accomplished successfully by the party's collective leadership, and not solely Mao's.

Subsequent revisions of the CCP's "guiding ideology" have followed the 1982 formulation and simply added to it in successive increments rather than altering it.

- The 15th Party Congress in 1997 added a new element to the 1982 formulation to enshrine the contributions of deceased paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to applying Marxism-Leninism to China's evolving realities. The party's guiding ideology now consisted of "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory." Deng Xiaoping Theory, the constitution preamble elaborated, "is a product of integrating Marxist-Leninist basic law with contemporary China's practice and the features of the times, the inheritance and development of Mao Zedong Thought under the new historical conditions, a new stage of the development of Marxism in China, Marxism of contemporary China, and a crystallization of the CCP's collective wisdom."
- In 2002, the 16th Congress added another element to the party's guiding ideology as Jiang Zemin stepped down as party chief. The party's ideological principles were now "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thinking of the three represents," incorporating a concept that Jiang had introduced in early 2000. "The important thinking of three represents," the preamble explained farther down, "is a continuation and development of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory; it reflects new requirements for the work of the Party and state arising from the changes in China and other parts of the world today; it serves as a powerful theoretical weapon for strengthening and improving Party building and for promoting self-improvement and development of socialism in China; and it is the crystallized, collective wisdom of the Communist Party of China."
- In 2012, the 18th CCP Congress added yet another element to the party's guiding ideology as General Secretary Hu Jintao retired from the party leadership. The party now was committed to "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the three represents, and the scientific development concept." Again, the preamble was revised to underscore the new element's provenance: "The scientific development concept is a scientific theory that is of the same lineage as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thinking of the three represents and advances with the times. It is the concentrated embodiment of the Marxist worldview and methodology regarding development, it is the latest achievement in the sinicization of Marxism, and it is the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the Communist Party of China."

It is important to note that Hu Jintao's "scientific development concept" had already been incorporated into the party constitution at the CCP's 17th Congress in 2007, though not as part of the party's "guiding ideology." Since the 15th Congress in 1997, successive revisions of the party constitution have incorporated new paragraphs to ratify the contributions of successive Central Committees to the party's evolving ideology.

The 1997 constitution thus included a paragraph following its declaration of the CCP's "guiding ideology" that saluted the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism as inspiring Chinese communism. A second and third paragraph hailed the leadership collective "with Comrade Mao Zedong as chief representative" for adapting those principles to China's specific circumstances and for leading the Chinese revolution to victory with the establishment of the PRC. A fourth paragraph praised the leadership collective "with Comrade Deng Xiaoping as chief representative" for "expounding the basic issues concerning building, strengthening, and developing socialism in China," establishing Deng Xiaoping theory as the party's latest theoretical innovation.

To this narrative of triumphant CCP innovations, the 16th Congress in 2002 added a new paragraph saluting the leadership collective "with Comrade Jiang Zemin as chief representative." The Jiang leadership "acquired a deeper understanding of what socialism is, how to build it and what kind of a party to build and how to build it, accumulating new valuable experience in running the Party and state, and forming the important thought of Three Represents."

Following this pattern, the 17th Congress in 2007 added yet another paragraph to the narrative, hailing the work of the outgoing 16th Central Committee in "pooling the wisdom of the whole Party to meet new requirements of development and formulating the *scientific development outlook*, which puts people first and calls for comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development." (Italics added.) Consistent with the 2007 constitution's leaving the party's "guiding ideology" unchanged, the paragraph qualified the "scientific development concept" as "an important guiding principle for China's economic and social development and a major strategic thought that must be upheld and applied in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics."

In 2012, the 18th Party Congress modified treatment of the "scientific development concept" in two respects. First, as stated above, it added Hu's "scientific development concept" to the party's "guiding ideology." Second, it rewrote the paragraph added to the 2007 constitution on the contribution of the Hu leadership, now stating that the "scientific development concept" deployed by the leadership collective "with Comrade Hu Jintao as chief representative" had the same far-reaching significance for guiding the party's work in all fields as previous innovations had.

The preceding analysis underscores three conclusions relevant to projecting how the 19th Congress may revise the party constitution with regard to ideology:

- First, there is more than one way to incorporate the Xi Jinping leadership's innovations in party ideology. Adding to the string of elements that compose the party's "guiding ideology" is one possibility; adding to the now standard narrative of the party ideology by successive Central Committee leaderships without modifying the party's "guiding ideology" is another.
- Second, a two-step approach emerges from the course of constitutional revision under Hu Jintao. If applied to the Xi leadership, a new paragraph to the

preamble's narrative would recognize the contribution to the party's ideological development under "the 18th Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as chief representative" at the 19th Congress and enumerate what those developments have been. Adding some element associated with the Xi leadership to the party's "guiding ideology" would then follow at the 20th Party Congress in 2022.

- Whichever course is taken at the 19th Congress, the new element to be incorporated must claim innovative significance for the party ideology of broadest scope. It should solve some new set of questions that have emerged out of China's changing economic, social, and political circumstances as socialism has advanced. And it should have some succinct (if not altogether exciting) formulation as a concept.

Xi Jinping Thought or Just Xi Speeches?

If the preceding conclusions offer any guidance about what to look for coming out of the 19th Congress, then available evidence from leadership statements and authoritative commentary in PRC media do little to suggest a one-step incorporation of ideological notions ascribed to Xi Jinping over a two-step approach.

For one thing, no overarching concept has emerged that encapsulates ideological innovations pioneered by Xi or by the Xi leadership. While there have been occasional references scattered here and there in low-level PRC media over the past five years to "Xi Jinping thought" (or "Xi Jinping thinking"—习近平思想), there have been none in authoritative leadership statements or commentary. References to Xi's thinking in specific policy sectors have appeared occasionally, such as Yang Jiechi's to "General Secretary Xi Jinping's foreign affairs thought" and that of Liu Yunshan to Xi's "party-building thought" (建党思想). But they are not general in implication, nor are they unique. Comparable references to Hu Jintao's "military thought," for example, occurred routinely during his tenure as party chief.

Further, the advent of "Xi Jinping Thought" would seem to catapult Xi's ideological stature over that of Deng Xiaoping, to rival Mao's. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the party briefly debated whether to embrace "Deng Xiaoping Thought" (邓小平思想) as the Deng leadership launched China onto the course of "reform and opening." Others countered that such a term inevitably raised concerns about a new personality cult around Deng, something Deng himself opposed, and so "Deng Xiaoping's thought" (邓小平的思想) was raised as an alternative. In the end, neither term was adopted and, as the party debated how to deal with Mao in its 1981 resolution on party history, "socialism with Chinese characteristics" emerged as the formulation encompassing the PRC's new ideological direction. Finally, in 1997, the term "Deng Xiaoping Theory" (邓小平理论) was devised to encapsulate the Deng leadership's contributions to party ideology.

Adoption of "Xi Jinpingism" (习近平主义) seems an outlandish choice by comparison and would seem to put Xi on a par with Marx and Leninism, leapfrogging even Mao. To the

best of my knowledge, the term enjoys no currency, and is traceable only to a solitary reference of uncertain provenance.

A survey of leadership statements and authoritative press commentary for potential alternative formulations does not yield obvious candidates. The most prominent may be “the spirit of the series of Comrade Xi Jinping’s important speeches,” a phrase that appeared first in the spring of 2013 and has been repeated endlessly in the media since. The most important collection of Xi’s speeches and talks—*The Governance of China*—was published in September 2014, expanded in a second edition published in April 2016, and mandated for party-wide study. Study of Xi’s “important speeches,” along with the constitution, was also incorporated into a new party education drive—the “two study and one act” (两学一做) campaign launched in December 2015 and institutionalized as a permanent requirement in March 2017.

“Xi Jinping’s important speeches” have been acclaimed as having “guiding” significance and comprehensive import:

- In a speech delivered at a February 2017 conference on party affairs and published later in the party journal *Qiushi*, Central Committee General Office Director and Politburo member Li Zhanshu declared that “the spirit of the series of important speeches given by General Secretary Xi Jinping is rich in content and broad, extensive, and profound, and it has covered various aspects of reform, development, and stability, domestic politics, foreign relations, and national defense, as well as administering the party, the state, and the armed forces.” The speeches’ “new concepts, new ideas, and new strategies have preliminarily formed a complete theoretical system,” Li continued.
- Similarly, Liu Yunshan, the Politburo Standing Committee member who manages the party apparatus on behalf of Xi Jinping, declared in a speech at the Central Party School on 16 May 2017 that Xi’s “important speeches” are “a new development of Marxism in contemporary China, rich in the context of the times and ideological connotations, and possessing important political, theoretical, practical, and methodological significance.” The speeches, he went on, “center on the Party’s governing the country and administering state affairs in the new situation, and they advance a series of new concepts, ideas, and strategies that are mutually related and linked.” The speeches “form a scientific theoretical system that is completely systematic and rigorously logical,” and they “provide a scientific theoretical and operational guide for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and for bringing about the objectives of the two centenary goals and the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” he concluded.

The implication is that “the spirit of the series of Comrade Xi Jinping’s important speeches” has acquired the attributes of “guiding ideology.” But “the spirit of the series of Comrade Xi Jinping’s important speeches” is not an ideological concept. Nor is it a snappy formulation like the “three represents,” or a lofty ideal like the “scientific

development concept.” And reciting “Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the three represents, the scientific development concept, and the spirit of the series of Comrade Xi Jinping’s important speeches” cannot easily be recited with a single breath, as would be required for endless repetition in leadership oratory. It may be that a shorthand formulation will emerge at the congress itself. But so far, no groundwork for such a shorthand has been laid.

Another possibility may be the formulation “new concepts, new thinking, and new strategies for governing the country and administering state affairs” (习近平治国理政新理念新思想新战略). This phrase emerged in PRC media in summer 2016 and is frequently recited in leadership statements and authoritative commentary alongside the “spirit of the series of Comrade Xi Jinping’s important speeches,” and often following the current formulation of the party’s “guiding ideology.” A Politburo meeting reviewing documents to be presented to the upcoming National People’s Congress session on 21 January, for example, called on the party to:

take Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of “Three Represents,” and the scientific outlook on development as guidance; thoroughly *implement the spirit of the series of important speeches of General Secretary Xi Jinping and the new concepts, new thinking, and new strategies of governing the country and running state affairs*; push forward in a coordinated manner the ‘five in one’ overall layout and push forward in a coordinated manner the ‘four comprehensives’ strategic layout.
[emphasis added]

As this citation makes plain, however, this formulation is subordinate to the “spirit” of Xi’s speeches and so would seem a lesser candidate for incorporation into the party’s “guiding ideology.” That is true also for other formulations that pervade discourse in the Xi era. The “five-in-one overall layout” (五位一体总体布局—simultaneous economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological construction) and the “four comprehensives strategic layout” (四个全面战略布局—building a moderately prosperous society, deepening reform, governing the nation according to law, and administering the party strictly) encapsulate reform strategies, not overarching ideological concepts. Similarly, achievement of the “China dream” (中国梦), which Xi Jinping enunciated in his first public statement as party chief, was intended as the theme of his leadership, paralleling Hu Jintao’s call for “people-centered” policies in his first public statement.

The upshot of the preceding survey is that there is no obvious formulation in public party discourse for incorporation into the party’s “guiding ideology.” It is possible, as widely speculated, that “Xi Jinping Thought” will make its debut at the 19th Party Congress. But the foundations for it have not been made, in contrast to the authoritative endorsement of Jiang Zemin’s “important thinking of the three represents” well before the 16th Congress and of Hu Jintao’s “scientific development concept” before the 18th.

Implications

At a minimum, reference to Xi Jinping and broad departures associated with his leadership since 2012 are certain to be added to the party constitution at the 19th Congress. This would come in a new paragraph added to the now standard narrative on the party's successful adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to China's contemporary realities by the 18th Central Committee "with Comrade Xi Jinping as chief representative." It remains to be seen whether the congress goes further and adds an as yet unnamed new element—explicitly credited to Xi or not—to the party's "guiding ideology." If such an addition is made, the road taken in the process will have differed substantially from that followed for previous inclusions.

Whichever revision emerges at the party congress will have import both for power and policy. If the party's "guiding ideology" incorporates a new element with Xi's name attached, it would signal Xi's political strength beyond that of Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao, whose names were not explicitly linked to the additions to the party ideology made under their auspices. If a new element is added without Xi's name attached, it would be a weaker signal of Xi's consolidation of power, despite having come earlier in his tenure than similar additions in the trajectories of previous leaders. And unless there is a severe break from established party tradition across the entire reform era, any revisions emerging from the congress will be credited to the collective wisdom of the broader 18th Central Committee leadership, and not solely to Xi Jinping's innovative genius.

Even the minimal case of a new, Xi-focused paragraph added to the narrative of the party's evolving ideology would add to the authority of the policies associated with the Xi leadership as Xi begins his second term. Much of Xi's policy agenda was set down in Hu Jintao's report to the 18th Congress and then spelled out more concretely in the 60-point resolution adopted at the November 2013 Third Plenum. The central focus of this agenda has been completion of the task of building "a moderately prosperous society" (小康社会) by 2020, a project ratified in Jiang Zemin's report to the 16th Party Congress in 2002, reaffirmed in Hu Jintao's report to the 17th Party Congress in 2007, and reaffirmed again by Hu in 2012.

Xi's political report to the 19th Congress is certain to reaffirm this project as it enters its final "critical" stage, a point strongly underscored by Xi in his speech presaging congress themes to ministerial and provincial leaders on 27 July. The energy behind the "comprehensive deepening of reforms" during Xi's first term has seemed to stall and dissipate in the face of resistance from "vested interests," as leadership statements and commentary have regularly complained. And so revision of the party constitution to reflect the Xi leadership's goals and policies, abetted by the now permanent campaign to study Xi's speeches and the party constitution, may revitalize flagging impetus behind the 2020 project.

Appendix:

The CCP Constitution on the Party's Guiding Ideology, 1922–2012

1922, 1923, 1925, & 1927 CCP Constitutions (Second through Fifth Congresses):

No reference to a guiding ideology.

Notes:

- The founding First Congress (July 1921) did not adopt a party constitution; it did adopt a “Program” (綱領), which did not declare a guiding ideology.
- After the 1922 Second Congress adopted a constitution, each of the subsequent congresses revised the party constitution, but none adopted language regarding the party's guiding ideology.

1928 CCP Constitution (Sixth Congress, Moscow, 18 June–11 July 1928)

No reference to a guiding ideology.

Notes:

- Added a statement that the CCP is “a section of the Comintern.”
- The Eighth Congress followed the 1927 collapse of the 1923–27 united front with the KMT. The identification of the CCP as a section of the Comintern may have been intended to reinforce Moscow's direction of the Chinese communist movement after the disasters of 1927.

1945 CCP Constitution (Seventh Congress, Yanan, 23 April–11 June 1945)

“The CCP takes the thought that integrates the theories of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of the Chinese revolution—Mao Zedong Thought—as the guide in all its work and opposes any dogmatist or empiricist bias.”

中國共產黨以馬克思列寧主義的理論與中國革命的實踐統一的思想—毛澤東思想—作為自己一切工作的指南，反對任何教條主義的或經驗主義的偏向。

Notes:

- The Seventh Congress consolidated Mao's leadership over the party following the 1942–43 Yanan rectification campaign that purged the International faction around Wang Ming. Thus its explicit rejection of “dogmatism” (action based on pure theory and books) and “empiricism” (actions based on narrow experience).
- The Comintern was abolished in 1943.

1956 CCP Constitution (Eighth Congress, Beijing, 15–27 September 1956)

“The CCP takes Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action.”

中國共產黨以馬克思列寧主義作為自己行動的指南。

Notes:

- The deletion of “Mao Zedong Thought” has been read by some (MacFarquhar, Teiwes) as reflecting the CCP's adaptation to the USSR's move toward de-

Stalinization following Khrushchev's secret speech at the February 1956 20th Congress. It was thus consistent with earlier highly authoritative party statements ("On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *People's Daily* editorial department article, 5 April 1956).

1969 CCP Constitution (Ninth Congress, Beijing, 1–24 April 1969)

"The CCP takes Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought as the theoretical foundation of its guiding ideology. Mao Zedong Thought is the Marxism-Leninism of the era when imperialism is headed toward total collapse and socialism is headed toward victory in the entire world."

中国共产党以马克思主义，列宁主义，毛泽东思想作为指导思想的理论基础。毛泽东思想是在帝国主义走向全面崩溃，社会主义走向全面世界胜利的时代的马克思列宁主义。

Notes:

- The formulation "Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought" rather than "Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought" may have been intended to elevate Mao to coequal status as a pioneering contributor to universal communist doctrine alongside Marx and Lenin rather than to the doctrine's application in China.
- The second statement underscores the prevailing line that Mao Zedong Thought applied not just to revolution in China but had universal application.

1973 CCP Constitution (10th Congress, Beijing, 24–28 August 1973)

"The CCP takes Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought as the theoretical foundation of its guiding ideology."

中国共产党以马克思主义，列宁主义，毛泽东思想作为指导思想的理论基础。

Notes:

- Identical to 1969 except for dropping the declaration that Mao Zedong Thought had universal relevance.

1977 CCP Constitution (11th Congress, Beijing, 12–18 August 1977)

"The guiding ideology and theoretical foundation of the CCP is Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought. The party resolutely opposes revisionism, dogmatism, and empiricism. The party upholds the worldview of dialectical materialism and historical materialism and opposes the worldviews of idealism and metaphysics.

"The great leader and teacher Chairman Mao Zedong was the founder of the Chinese Communist Party and the greatest Marxist-Leninist of the contemporary era. Chairman Mao integrated the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of revolution, inheriting, protecting and developing Marxism-Leninism in the struggle against imperialism and the reactionary classes in the country, against both the right and 'left' opportunist lines within the party, and against modern revisionism internationally."

中国共产党的指导思想和理论基础是马克思主义列宁主义毛泽东思想。党坚持反对修正主义，反对教条主义和经验主义。党坚持辩证唯物主义和历史唯物主义的世界观，反对唯心主义和形而上学的世界观。

伟大的领袖和导师毛泽东主席是中国共产党的缔造者，是当代最伟大的马克思列宁主义者。毛主席把马克思列宁主义的普遍真理和革命的具体实践相结合，在反对帝国主义和国内反动阶级的斗争中，在反对党内右的和‘左’的机会主义路线的斗争中，在反对国际现代修正主义的斗争中，继承捍卫和发展了马克思列宁主义。

Notes:

The 11th Congress followed Mao’s death in September 1976 and the purge of the “gang of four” in October 1976.

1982 CCP Constitution (12th Congress, Beijing, 1–11 September 1982)

“The Chinese Communist Party is the vanguard of the Chinese working class, the loyal representative of the interests of the people of the various nationalities of China, and the leading core of the Chinese socialist cause. The ultimate goal of the party is to realize the social institutions of communism. The Chinese Communist Party takes Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as its guide to action.”

中国共产党是中国工人阶级的先锋队，是中国民族人民利益的忠实代表，是中国社会主义事业的领导核心。党的最终目标是实现共产主义的社会制度。中国共产党以马克思列宁主义，毛泽东思想作为自己的行动指南。

1987 CCP Constitution (13th Congress, Beijing, 25 October–1 November 1987)

No changes regarding the party’s guiding ideology; several changes in other areas.

1992 CCP Constitution (14th Congress, Beijing, 12–19 October 1992)

No changes regarding the party’s guiding ideology; several changes in other areas.

1997 CCP Constitution (15th CCP Congress, Beijing, 12–18 September 1997)

“The Chinese Communist Party is the vanguard of the Chinese working class, the loyal representative of the interests of the people of the various nationalities of China, and the leading core of the Chinese socialist cause. The ultimate goal of the party is to realize the social institutions of communism. The Chinese Communist Party takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory as its guide to action.”

中国共产党是中国工人阶级的先锋队，是中国民族人民利益的忠实代表，是中国社会主义事业的领导核心。党的最终目标是实现共产主义的社会制度。中国共产党以马克思列宁主义，毛泽东思想，邓小平理论作为自己的行动指南。

Notes: The congress met following Deng Xiaoping’s death in February 1997.

2002 CCP Constitution (16th Congress, Beijing, 8–14 November 2002)

“The Communist Party of China is the vanguard both of the Chinese working class and of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. It is the core of leadership for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and *represents the development trend of China’s advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.* The realization of communism is the highest ideal and ultimate goal of the Party.” [emphasis added]

“The Communist Party of China takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory *and the important thought of Three Represents* as its guide to action.” [emphasis added]

中国共产党是中国工人阶级的先锋队，同时是中国人民和中华民族的先锋队是中国特色社会主义事业的领导核心，代表中国先进生产力的发展要求，代表中国先进文化的前进方向，代表中国最广大的根本利益。党的最终目标是实现共产主义。

中国共产党以马克思列宁主义，毛泽东思想，邓小平理论和‘三个代表’重要思想作为自己的行动指南。

Notes:

- Jiang Zemin introduced the “three represents” in a speech during a tour of Guangdong on 25 February 2000 and again in meeting with Shanghai delegates to the March 2000 NPC session.
- Authoritative Commentator articles in *People’s Daily* thereafter lauded the “three represents” as a “scientific summation and formulation” and as “Comrade Jiang Zemin’s creative application and development of Marxist theory on party-building in the new era” that “has enriched the treasure house of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory.”
- A 22 May 2000 *People’s Daily* editorial credited the concept to “the party CC with Comrade Jiang Zemin as the core,” indicating leadership consensus.
- Jiang’s report to the 16th Congress declared that the “three represents” were “the crystallization of the party’s collective wisdom and a guiding ideology that the party must follow for a long time to come.”

2007 CCP Constitution (17th Congress, Beijing, 15–21 October 2007)

Identical to the 2002 Constitution with respect to the party’s guiding ideology; but both the “scientific development concept” and the goal of building a “socialist harmonious society” were incorporated elsewhere in the constitution preamble. Thus:

“Since the Sixteenth National Congress, the Central Committee of the Party has followed the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and, by pooling the wisdom of the whole Party to meet new requirements of development, formulated the scientific development concept, which puts people first and

calls for comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development. The outlook is a scientific theory that is in the same line as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and keeps up with the times. It is an important guiding principle for China's economic and social development and a major strategic thought that must be upheld and applied in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

十六大以来，党中央坚持以邓小平理论和”三个代表”重要思想为指导，根据新的发展要求，集中全党智慧，提出了以人为本、全面协调可持续发展的科学发展观。科学发展观，是同马克思列宁主义、毛泽东思想、邓小平理论和”三个代表”重要思想既一脉相承又与时俱进的科学理论，是我国经济社会发展的重大指导方针，是发展中国特色社会主义必须坚持和贯彻的重大战略思想。

And:

“The Communist Party of China leads the people in building a *harmonious socialist society*.”

中国共产党领导人民构建社会主义和谐社会。

Notes:

- Hu Jintao introduced the formulation of “people-centered” policies as the main theme of his administration in December 2002, shortly after the 16th Congress.
- Hu introduced the “scientific development concept” in speeches in Ruijin (the site of Mao Zedong’s soviet base area in the early 1930s) and on an inspection tour in September and early October 2003.
- The concept was endorsed by the Politburo meeting on 24 November 2004, according to a Xinhua report, indicating leadership consensus behind it.
- The goal of a “socialist harmonious society” was set down in a resolution on party governance at the 16th Central Committee’s Fourth Plenum in September 2004. A major party resolution on the topic was adopted at the 16th Central Committee’s Sixth Plenum in October 2006.
- Hu Jintao elaborated on the substance of the “scientific development concept” in a major speech at the Central Party School in February 2005, and it was incorporated in the party proposals for the 11th Five-Year Plan at the Fifth Plenum in October 2005.
- Thereafter, authoritative commentary stressed the theoretical importance of the “scientific development concept.” In 2006, for example, the party journal *Qiushi* declared that “the scientific development concept is a crystallization of wisdom achieved by our party in working hard to explore the law of socialist construction, the law governing the Communist Party’s governance of the country, and the law governing the development of human society, and it is a continuation, enrichment, and development of Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thinking of the “Three Represents” on development.”

2012 CCP Constitution (18th Congress, Beijing, 8–14 November 2012)

“The Communist Party of China is the vanguard both of the Chinese working class and of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation. It is the leadership core for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and represents the development demands of

China's advanced productive forces, represents the forward direction of China's advanced culture, and represents the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. The realization of communism is the highest ideal and ultimate goal of the party."

"The Communist Party of China takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the 'Three Represents,' and *the scientific development concept* as its guide for action."

中国共产党是中国工人阶级的先锋队，同时是中国人民和中华民族的先锋队是中国特色社会主义事业的领导核心，代表中国先进生产力的发展要求，代表中国先进文化的前进方向，代表中国最广大的根本利益。党的最终目标是实现共产主义。

中国共产党以马克思列宁主义，毛泽东思想，邓小平理论'三个代表'重要思想，和科学发展观作为自己的行动指南。

And:

Since the 16th Party Congress, *the Chinese Communists*, with Comrade Hu Jintao as our chief representative, have followed the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thinking of the "Three Represents" and, in accordance with the new requirements for development, profoundly understanding and answering major questions—such as what kind of development to achieve and how to develop—in the new situation, formed the people-centered scientific development concept of comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development. The scientific development concept is a scientific theory that is of the same lineage as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thinking of the "Three Represents" and advances with the times. It is the concentrated embodiment of the Marxist worldview and methodology regarding development, it is the latest achievement in the sinicization of Marxism, it is the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the Communist Party of China, and it is a guiding ideology that must be upheld and applied in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

十六大以来，以胡锦涛同志为主要代表的中国共产党人，坚持以邓小平理论和“三个代表”重要思想为指导，根据新的发展要求，深刻认识 and 回答了新形势下实现什么样的发展、怎么发展等重大问题，形成了以人为本、全面协调可持续发展的科学发展观。科学发展观，是同马克思列宁主义、毛泽东思想、邓小平理论、“三个代表”重要思想既一脉相承又与时俱进的科学理论，是马克思主义关于发展的世界观和方法论的集中体现，是马克思主义中国化最新成果，是中国共产党集体智慧的结晶，是发展中国特色社会主义必须坚持和贯彻的指导思想。

Notes

¹ See “The Road to the 19th Party Congress,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 51 (30 August 2016).

² Judging by leadership appearances reported in PRC media, the retreat met for 15 days beginning on 2 August and closing on the 16th. The 2016 retreat was 15 days, and the pre-18th Congress 2012 retreat was also 15 days. As in past years, the regionally based Politburo members (now just Shanghai’s Han Zheng and Guangdong’s Hu Chunhua) apparently did not attend. Hu Chunhua was reported appearing nearly daily in Guangdong, on inspection tours of Foshan and other points in the province. Han Zheng did not appear as regularly, but appeared at least on the 11th and 15th in Shanghai. Some Beijing-based Politburo members did not attend the full retreat, if at all. Wang Yang appeared in Beijing on the 2nd and departed for Pakistan on the 13th. PBSC member Yu Zhengsheng led a delegation that included the PB’s two women (Sun Chunlan and Liu Yandong) to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Inner Mongolian AR in lovely downtown Hohhot 7–11 August.

³ For the former view, see Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, revised edition (New York: The Free Press, 1986), p. 182. For alternative views, see Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Vol.I: *Contradictions among the People, 1956–57* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 100–107; and Frederick C. Teiwes, “The Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime, 1949–1957,” in Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *The Politics of China: Sixty Years of the People’s Republic of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 74.