

## **“Great Changes Unseen in a Century”: The Elusive Phrase Driving China's Grand Strategy**

It was in 1872 that the Qing Dynasty general Li Hongzhang lamented the predations of Western powers with a famous phrase: the world was experiencing “great changes unseen in 3,000 years.” That sweeping declaration, a reminder to China's nationalists of the country's own humiliations, has been repurposed by President Xi since 2017 to inaugurate the new phase in China's post-Cold War grand strategy. Xi has declared that the world is undergoing “great changes unseen in a century.”

If Li's line marks the highpoint of China's humiliation, then Xi's marks an occasion for its rejuvenation. If Li's evokes tragedy, then Xi's evokes opportunity. But both capture something essential: the idea that world order is once again at stake because of unprecedented geopolitical and technological shifts, and that this requires strategic adjustment.

China is now consciously targeting the underpinnings of what it considers to be US hegemony, hoping to seize the opportunities of the “great changes unseen in a century” to displace the United States as the world's leading state. It is actively working to blunt American global order while building the political, economic, and military foundations for China's own order.

The concept “great changes unseen in a century” is critical to understanding China's global grand strategy, and it implies a belief that the United States has entered a decline so pronounced that its status as the sole superpower is now in doubt. The term's formal elevation in 2017 was evidence that China was adjusting its grand strategy in response. It is a phrase that is given pride of place everywhere. It now appears in dozens of speeches by Xi Jinping, and his foreign policy team, is placed at the start of China's foreign policy and defense *White Papers* and has become the overwhelming focus of China's foreign policy academics. Xi Jinping has even made its importance to strategy abundantly clear. “I often say that leading cadres must keep two overall situations in mind,” he noted in a recent speech, “one is the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the other is the great changes unseen in a century. *This is the basic starting point of our planning work.*”<sup>1</sup>

### **China's Grand Strategic Adjustment**

China's assessment of American power has long been critical to its grand strategy. Since the end of the Cold War, each leader has publicly anchored Chinese grand strategy to concepts like “multipolarity” and “the international balance of forces” that are essentially polite euphemisms for the

relative balance between Chinese and American power. When China's perception of American strength shifts, its strategy generally changes.

Over the last thirty years, this has happened twice and produced two strategies. The first time was after Tiananmen Square when the Soviet Union's collapse led China to see the United States—once a Cold War quasi-ally—as a powerful and ideologically threatening adversary. In response, Chinese leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin *encouraged* the *country* to “hide its capabilities and bide its time.” This first Chinese strategy was about quietly *blunting* American regional influence. Beijing used asymmetric capabilities to thwart American military power, trade agreements to constrain American economic coercion, and membership in regional institutions to stall American rule-setting and coalition-building.

A second strategic shift came twenty years later, when the global financial crisis of 2008 convinced Beijing that the United States was weakening. Chinese leader Hu Jintao *revised* China's Deng-era strategy to emphasize “actively accomplishing something.” This second Chinese strategy was about *building* regional order. Beijing now openly pursues power projection capabilities to intervene in the region, uses the Belt and Road Initiative and economic statecraft to create and wield leverage over others, and builds international institutions to set regional rules.

The “great changes unseen in a century” marks the beginning of a third, more global shift toward *expansion*. The term first emerged years earlier from conversations about Western decline after the Global Financial Crisis. One of its first usages was in a 2009 essay titled “The Financial Crisis and American Economic Hegemony” written by Yuan Peng—an authoritative figure who led the US Institute at the Ministry of State's Security's think-tank, CICIR, and now leads the entire think-tank. Yuan Peng observed that the United States “for the first time in the history of its hegemony” was suffering from a series of grave challenges, that these were producing “great changes unseen in a century,” and that those great changes in turn were “impacting the US-led political and economic order.”<sup>2</sup> But while the United States was in decline, Chinese commentators believed it would still remain the sole superpower, and for that reason the phrase appeared only a handful of times subsequently—perhaps most notably in a 2012 interview with the rising-star Chinese diplomat Le Yucheng, who was later one of the brains behind China's Belt and Road. Although these references showed the phrase had entered official consciousness, it had not yet gained the party's imprimatur, and with the United States still seemingly formidable, it largely disappeared from official discourses.

### **The Rise of the “Great Changes”**

All that changed in 2017 when the phrase rose rapidly to a central position in official and semi-official discourses in the immediate aftermath of Brexit and Trump's election. Those events suggested to Beijing that Western influence was waning and that the status of the United States as the world's sole superpower was at risk, and the term's sudden emergence that year indicated that a broader strategic adjustment was underway.

The process began only a week before President Trump's inauguration, when State Councilor Yang Jiechi debuted the phrase in a 2017 essay, posted on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, expounding on the foreign affairs component of the newly developed and soon-to-be-ratified “Xi Jinping Thought.” Yang linked the concept to assessments of the United States. “The current international situation is undergoing great changes that have not been encountered since

the end of the Cold War—or even in a century—and all kinds of chaos have emerged,” Yang noted. “The impact of changes on the political situation in some countries [i.e., the United Kingdom and the United States] and on the international situation deserves attention.”<sup>3</sup> International structure was now changing, and the “great changes” underway presaged a major strategic shift.

The next month, only weeks after President Trump’s inauguration, that strategic shift at last began. President Xi made it clear that China’s perception of American power was changing in a 2017 address to China’s National Security Work Forum, a high-level meeting convened to discuss foreign affairs. “This was a world of *profound changes* in the international balance of forces,” he argued, using a euphemism for US decline and the very concept to which Chinese leaders anchor the country’s grand strategy.<sup>4</sup> An official commentary on his speech written for party cadres sharpened these themes.<sup>5</sup> “Although Western regimes appear to be in power,” it noted, “their willingness and ability to intervene in world affairs is declining.”<sup>6</sup> The commentary indicated Xi’s speech was a sign that it was time to “leave behind” the era of “hiding capabilities and biding time.”<sup>7</sup> That fall, in his 19th Party Congress Report, Xi continued to stress that the balance of power was changing. “Changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up,” he said, and “the balance of relevant international forces is becoming more balanced,” another reference to the critical variable around which China’s grand strategy appears to turn.<sup>8</sup> Many of the key themes in China’s new global grand strategy to reach what Xi called “the world’s center stage”—namely, its interest in global governance, technology leadership, and a global military profile—emerged in this speech.

Xi finally debuted the phrase “great changes unseen in a century” in late 2017 about a month after the Party Congress address. He did this at the 2017 Ambassadorial Conference, and speeches to these gatherings – which involve the entire foreign policy apparatus and all of China’s overseas ambassadors – have historically been used to adjust China’s strategy.<sup>9</sup> This speech was no exception. “Looking at the world today,” he declared, “we are facing great changes unseen in a century.”<sup>10</sup> China’s grand strategy was changing, and China was increasingly confident. “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has shown unprecedented bright prospects,” Xi noted, and as long as China stayed the course, “it will increasingly approach the center of the world stage.”<sup>11</sup> In some areas, Xi’s speech subtly intensified language from the Party Congress address. “The international structure [国际格局] has become increasingly balanced, and this general international trend has become irreversible”—phrases stronger than he or his predecessors had used and a sign that strategy was changing.<sup>12</sup> What did all this mean? The next year at his 2018 Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference, only the sixth ever held in China’s history, Xi explained: “At present, China is in the best development period since modern times, and the world is in a state of great changes not seen in one hundred years, and these two [trends] are simultaneously interwoven and mutually interacting.” To Xi, China’s global rise and the apparent decline of the West were trends that reinforced each other.

Xi’s language on American decline amid the “great changes unseen in a century” was often oblique, but top Chinese scholars and semi-official commentaries were far more candid. They indicated that the key “great change” was unquestionably the decline of the United States and the West relative to China. Critically, these sources followed Xi’s lead and explicitly linked the

“great change” with the same variable that shaped decades of China’s own grand strategy: the international balance of forces. As the famous Chinese international relations scholar Zhu Feng wrote, “the ‘great change’ in ‘great changes unseen in a century’ is an acceleration in the redistribution of power among nations within the international structure.”<sup>13</sup> A commentary posted online at *Study Times* argued that “the essence of the great changes is that the power balance among major international actors has undergone major changes” that “triggered a major reshuffling of the international structure and a major adjustment to the international order.”<sup>14</sup> Zhang Yuyan, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, wrote, “the most critical variable of the great changes unseen in a century lies in the international balance of power among the major countries.”<sup>15</sup> Writing more expansively, Duqing Hao from the Central Party School argued that all “the great changes in world history” have included “major changes in the international balance of power among the major international actors.”<sup>16</sup>

But what was the cause of this change in power? These scholars argue it was not only China’s rise but also the West’s fall, which was made clear by a new trifecta of shocking and discontinuous events that began with Brexit and Trump’s election and was capped off by the West’s disastrous response to COVID-19. In an essay on the “great changes,” Wu Xinbo argued that the United States was “spiritually exhausted, physically weak, and could no longer carry the world.”<sup>17</sup> Zhu Feng from Nanjing University argued that, as “Western countries experience serious domestic contradictions” due to populism, “the East rises and the West falls.”<sup>18</sup> Central Party School figures like Luo Jianbo, tasked in part with standardizing and disseminating Party concepts, wrote that the “great changes unseen in a century” were a “grand strategic judgment” and he noted that they marked the end of the “Atlantic era” in global politics.<sup>19</sup> Gao Zugui, a dean at the Central Party School and deputy director of its Institute for International Strategy, proclaimed, “The willingness, determination, and ability of the United States to control the regional and international situations alone have declined significantly.”<sup>20</sup>

Behind these bold pronouncements stood thousands of papers by China’s top academics on Western decline. The papers showcase China’s own biases, including a tendency to focus on the “base structure” of the economy that flows from Marxist theory to see diversity as a weakness, given China’s relative homogeneity, and to see information flows as dangerous given China’s own illiberalism. Most papers tell a similar if simplistic causal story: the West’s forty-year experiment with “neoliberal” economic policies exacerbated economic inequality and ethnic strife, which in turn produced populist waves that paralyzed the state—all amplified by a freewheeling Western information environment. These are not the views of a handful of obscure experts; they are so common as to be consensus, and they resemble what Party elites believe about the United States—and why they are increasingly emboldened.

### **The “Great Changes” and National Rejuvenation**

The end goal of China’s global grand strategy is to achieve national rejuvenation by 2049. From Beijing’s perspective, the essential task for the next three decades is to seize the opportunities of the “great changes unseen in a century” to surpass the United States globally all the while by avoiding the growing risk of a United States unwilling to gracefully accept its decline. The period of the “great changes” is one that Beijing indicates is full of both great opportunities and

risks, but China's leaders believe the former outweigh the latter. This is why they maintain that China remains in a period of "strategic" or "historical" opportunities for achieving rejuvenation.

The link between the "great changes" and rejuvenation is clear in authoritative speeches. "The world is facing great changes unseen in a century . . . which brings great opportunities for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," Xi and his fellow leaders declared in 2018.<sup>21</sup> "The world today is undergoing great changes unseen in a century, and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is at a critical period," he said in a 2019 address.<sup>22</sup> That same year, he told the Central Party School, "The world today is in a state of changes unseen in a century. The great struggle, great project, great cause, and great dream of our party are in full swing," referencing rejuvenation. This understanding is widespread. In a summary of academic writing on the concept, one scholar from CASS argued that, "on the whole, it is generally believed that the 'great changes unseen in a century' is an important historic opportunity for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."<sup>23</sup>

If the "great changes" mark an opportunity to seize rejuvenation, what then does rejuvenation mean? Although it is controversial in Western circles to suggest the goal of this concept is to displace the United States as the world's leading state by 2049, this is now often implicit and sometimes explicit in discussions of rejuvenation and the "great changes." For example, even Zhang Yunling—a senior Chinese academic and sometime adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who generally advocates a liberal foreign policy—in an essay on the concept linked rejuvenation to surpassing the United States. "In history, China was the country with the strongest comprehensive power in the world," he noted; "it is expected that by the middle of the twenty-first century, that is, in 2050, China will be able to rank first in the world in terms of comprehensive strength and [will be able to] complete the great goal of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."<sup>24</sup> In another essay, he wrote, "the greatest change in the last century was the continuous improvement of American power, from surpassing Britain, defeating Germany and Japan, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and becoming the only superpower." But now, "in the first half of the twenty-first century," he continued, "the greatest change is most likely to be that China's comprehensive strength surpasses that of the United States. . . . This is undoubtedly the most important change in the power structure since Western industrialization."<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, an authoritative Xinhua editorial published during the Chinese Communist Party's 19th Party Congress declared, "By 2050, two centuries after the Opium Wars, which plunged the 'Middle Kingdom' into a period of hurt and shame, China is set to regain its might and re-ascend to the top of the world."<sup>26</sup> An article published, under a pseudonym, on the website of the Central Party School's journal *Study Times* made clear that the "great changes" are about the changing international "power balance," with the author writing in sweeping terms about how "the United States gradually replaced Britain as the leader of the Western camp and the leader of world order" on its path to "world domination," suggesting the changes brewing now between the United States and China are of equal historical significance.<sup>27</sup> In an essay commissioned by the central government, CASS Deputy Director of the Belt and Road Research Center Ren Jingjing argued, "China will become a high-income country around 2021; by 2030, China's GDP may significantly exceed that of the United States; by 2035, China's high-tech R&D expenditures may exceed those of the United States; by 2050, China's military expenditures may exceed those of the United States."<sup>28</sup> This statement aligns China's desire to surpass the United States with the

official timeline for rejuvenation, both of which focus on the PRC's centenary in 2049. "If China develops smoothly," Ren continued, "China's strength in all aspects will continue to approach or even surpass that of the United States in the next thirty years."<sup>29</sup> In fact, "the trend of the 'great changes' depends on the next thirty years," which Ren argued, constitutes "a transitional period."<sup>30</sup> Party officials appear to share this assessment that the next three decades—and the next decade in particular—are at the core of seizing the opportunities posed by the "great changes unseen in a century." As Xi himself argued, "The next ten years will be a decade of accelerated evolution of the international structure and balance of power [国际力量对比]," and "the next ten years will [also] be a decade of profound remodeling of the global governance system."<sup>31</sup>

### **The "Great Changes" and Risk and Reward**

These "great changes" involve risk and reward, and in the very speech debuting the "great changes" concept, Xi described this transitional period as one of "unprecedented opportunities and unprecedented challenges."<sup>32</sup> He has stressed these themes on multiple occasions. "We are facing rare historical opportunities and a series of challenges," he noted in a speech on the "great changes" and national rejuvenation.<sup>33</sup> "Crises and opportunities coexist in the great changes," he and other party leaders noted at the 2018 Central Economic Work Forum.<sup>34</sup>

What exactly are these opportunities and challenges? China's 2019 *White Paper*, "China and the World in the New Era," provides an answer. It features a detailed section on the "great changes" that is divided into opportunities and challenges.<sup>35</sup> And it, together with scholarly commentary, strongly suggests that the opportunity comes from US withdrawal and decline; the risk, however, comes from greater US resistance to China's rise as its own decline becomes obvious.

First, the *White Paper* states clearly that "these great changes expedite the arrival of new opportunities" and that "the greatest change of the 'changes unseen in a century' is precisely *China's rise* . . . which fundamentally changes the international power balance." It argues that, "Since the First Industrial Revolution, international politics and the economic system have been dominated by Western powers." This was no longer the case, the *White Paper* notes, including a graph depicting the decreasing global share of "developed country" GDP. As a result, "in the world today, multipolarity is accelerating, modern development models are increasingly diverse, and . . . no single country or bloc of countries can alone exercise dominance in world affairs."

All these trends produced China's "opportunities," an interpretation that other commentaries largely echoed. For example, in an October 2018 interview, Yan Xuetong declared that "I think this is the best period of strategic opportunity for China since the end of the Cold War."<sup>36</sup> Explaining his logic, Yan argued, "Trump has ruined the US-led alliance system and improved China's international environment. . . . In a strategic sense, China's international environment is much better than it was before Trump came to power."<sup>37</sup> He put the situation in historical context: "In short, compared with the Korean War in the 1950s, the Vietnam War in the 1960s, and the international sanctions in the 1990s, China's current international difficulties are very small, and the gap between China and the United States is much smaller than before."<sup>38</sup> His overall point: "What matters most now is how China should take advantage of this strategic opportunity."<sup>39</sup> Others had a similar perspective. Wu Xinbo notes that the Trump administration

had been “constantly retreating” internationally, from “the withdrawal from TPP, the Paris Agreement on climate change, UNESCO, the Universal Postal Union, the termination of the JCPOA with Iran, the threat of withdrawal from the WTO, slamming NATO and even the UN, withdrawing from the INF treaty, announcing the withdrawal of troops from Syria, etc. It seems that the United States cannot help but give up its position in the postwar order.” “De-Americanization,” Wu Xinbo argued, “objectively creates a window of opportunity for various regions and countries to reposition themselves and solve various historical problems.” When the United States declines, the “delegation of its powers and loosening of its restrictions” can also bring people unexpected strategic dividends and benefits.”<sup>40</sup>

Second, the *White Paper* also points to challenges, namely risks, emanating from the United States. “The Cold War mentality of encirclement, constraint, confrontation, and threat is resurfacing,” it argues. “Some Western countries are facing serious difficulties in governance, populism is widespread, and attacks on globalization are intensifying.” Xi Jinping implied this when he said in a 2019 speech: “the world today is undergoing great changes unseen in a century, and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is at a critical stage. *The closer the goal is, the more complicated the situation and the more arduous the task.*”<sup>41</sup>

Scholarly commentaries echo these themes more explicitly. The main challenge to rejuvenation is the United States, argued a dean at the Central Party School writing in the institution’s Central Party and Government Cadre Forum: “For China, the great changes bring both challenges and opportunities. The challenge mainly comes from the strategic game of great powers. The United States has regarded China as a strategic competitor, and the overall strength of the United States is still stronger than that of China. In this case, whether it can cope with the strategic competitive pressure of the United States is a severe test for China.”<sup>42</sup> Most see a declining United States lashing out, sometimes self-destructively, at an ascendant China. Ren Jingjing from CASS argued, “The United States is the biggest constraint on China’s road to its rise and national rejuvenation” and seeks to “remove China from the global value chain” to undermine it.<sup>43</sup> Zhu Feng, who often cautions a more restrained foreign policy, worried that triumphalism in China’s discourse—particularly the discourse on “great changes unseen in a century”—will prematurely trigger Western anxieties. “The more China’s rise sees forward momentum, the more Western countries will worry about losing their power advantages, and strong and powerful containment of and checks and balances on China will become more obvious. The discussion of ‘great changes’ cannot indulgently focus only on the redistribution of power in the international system, it also needs to avoid becoming a new target for the West to attack China.”<sup>44</sup> By late 2019, it was clear the United States was the core obstacle. For example, a piece written by a scholar at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies on the “great changes” argued, “The United States and other Western countries openly regard China as their main competitor,” though “the leading position of Western civilization in global politics, economy, military, and ideology has entered a relatively weak cycle,” in part due to populism, offering a potential reprieve.<sup>45</sup>

China’s strategists would prefer the United States graciously accept its decline. A dean at the Central Party School writing in the institution’s Central Party and Government Cadre Forum argued: “In the great changes, the most uncertain factor is the Western powers, especially the only superpower, the United States. Whether the United States can judge the current situation, follow the trend, respond rationally to the great changes, and realize the decline of hegemony in

an elegant and decent way is an important factor that determines the process of the great changes.” Even if it did not, US resistance “can only delay the progress of the great changes but could not determine their direction.”<sup>46</sup> In the long run, US decline was inevitable.

How then to weigh the balance between opportunities and risks? In general, the opportunities were greater. A dean at the Central Party School wrote in the institution’s Central Party and Government Cadre Forum: “The opportunities brought about by the great changes should be more worthy of attention [than the risks]. General Secretary Xi Jinping’s discussion of major changes is usually linked to the assertion that China is still in a period of important strategic opportunities.”<sup>47</sup> China would have to strive vigorously to achieve rejuvenation by 2049. As Xi put it in a 2017 address, “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation cannot be achieved with great ease or simply by playing drums and gongs [敲锣打鼓]. A great struggle must be waged to realize this great dream. . . . The various struggles we face are not short term but long term, and they will accompany us throughout the process of fulfilling our second centenary goal [of rejuvenation].”<sup>48</sup> As a 2021 speech makes clear, Xi was confident in the future. “The world is undergoing great changes unseen in a century, *but time and momentum are on our side*. This is where our force and vigor reside, and it is also where our determination and confidence reside.”<sup>49</sup>

In short, China would need an approach integrating political, economic, and military means to achieve these lofty goals and displace the United States from the global order. That strategy would involve putting forward global institutions at the political level, seizing the “fourth industrial revolution” at the economic level, and securing increasingly global capabilities at the military level—all to apply the *blunting* and *building* strategies long underway within Asia to the wider world.

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<sup>1</sup> Xi Jinping [习近平], *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, Volume 3* [习近平谈治国理政, 第三卷] (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2020), 77. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Yuan Peng [袁鹏], “Financial Crisis and U.S. Economic Hegemony: An Interpretation of History and Politics” [金融危机与美国经济霸权: 历史与政治的解读], *Contemporary*

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International Relations [现代国际关系], no. 5 (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Yang Jiechi [杨洁篪], “Continue to Create New Prospects for Foreign Work under the Guidance of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s Diplomatic Thoughts” [在习近平总书记外交思想指引下不断开创对外工作新局面], Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China, January 14, 2017, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceus/chn/zgyw/t1430589.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> “Xi Jinping’s First Mention of the ‘Two Guidances’ Has Profound Meaning,” [近平首提‘两个引导’有深意], Study China [学习中国], February 21, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20171219140753/http://www.ccln.gov.cn/hotnews/230779.shtml>. Emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> This commentary was written by the editor of the China Cadre Learning Network and was posted on Chinese state media, including the website of the People’s Daily.

<sup>6</sup> “Xi Jinping’s First Mention of the ‘Two Guidances’ Has Profound Meaning.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. This commentary was published by the leadership of the China Cadre Learning Network [中国干部学习网], which publishes material for circulation to Party cadres.

<sup>8</sup> Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 18, 2017,

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi\\_Jinping%27s\\_report\\_at\\_19th\\_CPC\\_National\\_Congress.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping%27s_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> “Xi Jinping Meets the 2017 Ambassadorial Conference and Delivers an Important Speech” [习近平接见 2017 年度驻外使节工作会议与会使节并发表重要讲话], Xinhua [新华] December 28, 2017, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-12/28/c\\_1122181743.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-12/28/c_1122181743.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>13</sup> Zhu Feng [朱锋], “A Summary of Recent Academic Research on ‘Great Changes Unseen in a Century’” [近期学界关于‘百年未有之大变局’研究综述], People’s Forum: Academic Frontier [人民论坛：学术前沿], no. 4 (2019). This piece was appeared in a social science journal published by the People’s Daily.

<sup>14</sup> Li Jie [李杰], “Deeply Understand and Grasp the World’s ‘Big Changes Unseen in a Century’” [深刻理解把握世界“百年未有之大变局”], Study Times [学习时报], September 3, 2018, [https://web.archive.org/web/20200624172344/http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2018-09/03/c\\_1123369881.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20200624172344/http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2018-09/03/c_1123369881.htm). This piece was initially published in the Party School journal Study Times [学习时报] and then posted on the Seeking Truth [求是] website.

<sup>15</sup> Zhang Yuyan [张宇燕], “Understanding the Great Changes Unseen in a Century” [理解百年未有之大变局], International Economic Review [国际经济评论], September 18, 2019, [http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-09/18/c\\_1125010363.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-09/18/c_1125010363.htm).

<sup>16</sup> Du Qinghao [杜庆昊], “Great Changes Unseen in a Century in Historical Perspective” [大历史视野中的‘百年未有之大变局’], Study Times [学习时报], March 11, 2019, [http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-03/11/c\\_1124218453.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-03/11/c_1124218453.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Wu Xinbo [武心波], “The Great Changes Unseen in a Century and Sino-Japanese Relations Have Bright Spots and Dark Spots” [百年未有大变局，中日关系有‘明’‘暗’], Liberation Daily [解放日报], January 15, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Zhu Feng, “A Summary of Recent Academic Research on ‘Great Changes Unseen in a Century.’”

<sup>19</sup> Luo Jianbo [罗建波], “From the Overall Perspective, Understand and Grasp the World’s Great Changes Unseen in a Century” [从全局高度理解和把握世界百年未有之大变局], Study Times [学习时报], June 7, 2019, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0607/c40531-31125044.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Gao Zugui [高祖贵], “The Rich Connotation of the Great Changes Unseen in a Century” [世界百年未有之大变局的丰富内涵], Study Times [学习时报], January 21, 2019,

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<http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0121/c40531-30579611.html>.

<sup>21</sup> “The Central Economic Work Conference is Held in Beijing; Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang Deliver Important Speeches” [中央经济工作会议在北京举行 习近平李克强作重要讲话], Xinhua [新华], December 21, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-12/21/c\\_1123887379.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-12/21/c_1123887379.htm).

<sup>22</sup> Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, vol. 3, 294.

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<sup>27</sup> Li Jie, “Deeply Understand and Grasp the World’s ‘Big Changes Unseen in a Century.’”

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> “Xi Jinping: Follow the Trend of the Times to Achieve Common Development” [习近平：顺应时代潮流 实现共同发展] (Speech at the BRICS Business Forum, Johannesburg, South Africa, July 25, 2018).

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<sup>48</sup> “Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Training Class for Young and Middle-Aged Cadres at the Central Party School.”

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Emphasis added.