



## Xi Jinping's China Dream and the Road Ahead

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The 'China Dream' proposed by the fifth generation leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Xi Jinping throws lights on how he plans to take China forward during the time of his reign from 2012 to 2022. The presentation examined and looked into how ideologically strong and motivated Jinping's dream was, and what were the ways and through which means he would adopt to pursue this initiative. Moreover, the speaker further tried to throw light on some other broad areas, such as examining the strategic, military, economic and political challenges corresponding to this 'China Dream', and whether Xi's new agenda would constitute as an opportunity or a threat to the rest of the world.

Many scholars across China have shared the view that the inspiration behind Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' might have been taken from a retired Chinese Army Colonel named Liu Mingfu. Liu in his book called *China Dream: Great Power Thinking and Strategic Posture in the Post American Era*, puts the idea forward that it would take another ninety years for China to be on par with United States at the military level. On the other hand, some scholars argue that the notion of Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' is instead more inspired by the ideas of Thomas Friedman, who had stated that China ought to have its own unique dream and not follow the dream of any country. It should target those areas where it feels more attention is essential like assisting the middle class to emerge, and then subsequently should come up with its own ways to address those issues or concerns. However, after extensively studying and going over the available limited literature on this topic, the speaker contends that Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' is neither directly inspired by Mingfu or Freidman. Xi appears to have his own set of development ideas for China, which are expected to be achieved before the year 2022. Xi has the ultimate aim to rejuvenate and revive the Chinese military and further plans to make it supreme in the upcoming years. This belief of the speaker is further strengthened when Xi during his speech at a key naval base in the disputed South China Sea in April 2013, clearly stated that ...“it's all about having a strong armed forces, and this is how I will like to pursue it further”. The speech by Xi gives more or less a clear indication that instead of being inspired, he is actually countering the ideas of Thomas Friedman.

The year 2021 is the centenary year of the Communist party of China. Therefore from now till 2021, the expectations by the Chinese local population will see Xi Jinping carrying forward the work of his predecessors, who have laid a solid foundation. The clear indication provided by Xi through this speech and further raising the view for the demand of a strong military, it becomes evident that Xi is not only contradicting Hu Jintao's ideals of peaceful rise of China, but he is also giving a negative signal that

through his notion of 'China Dream'. In this context it is doubtful whether emergence of China will after all be peaceful process.

At the ideological level, Xi within his short time in power has provided a picture which favours a strong party rule that will ultimately lead to China becoming more powerful militarily. The speaker also shares the belief that Xi through his dream plans to continue the legacy of Mao Zedong in relation to the seven unmentionables. The seven unmentionables includes universal values, press freedom, freedom of civil society, citizen's rights, discussion of CCP's past, independence of judiciary and privileged working class. These are the matters which are prohibited and teachers across school and university level within China. A famous South African blogger and editor Jeremy Goldkorn believes that the Chinese notion of setting up one of the largest market and economy in the world, it has not really compensated or awarded recognition to the work what the ordinary Chinese has put into in order to take China to that level where it is today. Therefore Xi's idea of his 'China Dream' of solely concentrating on economic and military growth is vague idea, and instead he should be enhancing the status of the neglected middle class within China.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn in one of his articles in Atlantic Press argues that China's huge economic growth since 1978 has brought with itself tremendous economic growth as well as burden, through the form of rampant and enhanced corrupt activities. Kuhn went on to state that the phrase 'China Dream' is used by Xi in order to confuse and manipulate the minds of the local population, who believe that a massive change is around the corner, while in reality nothing big is going to change. Moreover through this phrase, Xi aims to be part of the Chinese legacy and further wants to be remembered in the league of his predecessors of great leaders. While the actions taken by Xi's Government in the handling of the Bo Xilai's corruption case, and further coming up with the following statement that "all the tigers and flies will be caught", clearly indicates that no corrupt personnel will be spared, can be seen as a commendable approach.

Many western scholars share the view that instead of focusing on becoming a military or economic super power, there are five internal areas of concern which Xi should look into before the crises escalate. The five areas of concern are: proper handling of the South China Sea disputes in a responsible manner with its Asian neighbours; proper handling of the Taiwan and Tibet issue; countering the threat of global terrorist activities; assisting the middle class population to rise, and lastly and most importantly managing and limiting corrupt practices within China. Corruption should be thrown out from the Chinese society, so a benchmark could be set for future generation of leaders when they do come to power. Therefore, by the time the sixth generation of leadership is ready to take power in 2022, a massive effort should be taken by Xi and his Government in order to either resolve or calm these areas of concern. All in all, the main challenge for Xi and his government now should ideally be to transform CCP into an institutionalized ruling party, where an institutional framework is laid on how to go about leading the society in a systematic and just way. Once these issues are addressed, only then the local population of China will start realizing their own dreams through Xi's 'China Dream', are being fulfilled.

The scholars propagated the theory that once China takes over the world market and economy then it will take over the world, yet this did not happen either. Then many provided the opinion that only after successful hosting the Beijing Olympics China will take over the world. However even then this could not happen. Therefore the question arises: When will China actually take over the world? The reply given to this query by the speaker was: In order to gain or snatch power, one must be ready to go for war or through multiple crises. However, since China's aim is to rise peacefully and through developing and improving its goodwill relations with other countries around the world, this theory of China taking over the world might just not happen. China aims to develop better political and social relations, and this is the sole

reason behind China's cooperation with many African and Latin American countries in many development and energy related projects.

Another participant commented that just one year in power is a very short period for someone to judge the dream of any leader. Therefore, one must not react quickly and presume that China will only rise through militarily or peacefully under Xi Jinping's reign, as it is very early to make any conclusions at the present moment. Moreover, it was further commented that it would have been worthwhile if Dr. Saikia had incorporated the views of Chinese scholars also in his work on how they perceive Xi Jinping's 'China Dream', rather than just focusing on the views of western scholars. Capturing the views of Chinese thinkers might have added more purpose to this research paper.

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