

A dangerous history repeats: Xi Jinping's regime is insecure and illegitimate
Opinion by Bradley A. Thayer - The Hill

Insecure leaders in control of illegitimate governments and parties make for a dangerous time in international politics. Nazi Germany was one; China under the leadership of Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is another.



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When Xi's remarks are considered in historical perspective, there is a relevant insight from Sir Nevile Henderson's memoir, "Failure of a Mission," of his time as British ambassador to Nazi Germany from 1937 until the outbreak of the war.

Henderson's acuity was demonstrated in his assessment of Adolf Hitler's deep insecurity, which, he argued, had a major effect upon his foreign policy decision-making. In Hitler's characterization of himself — much like Xi's — it was always that Germany was maltreated and abused and yet, at the same time, a supremely powerful, unstoppable country, whom Destiny had chosen to define the future.

In Henderson's reflection of his time in Berlin as the British ambassador, he wrote that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain "so aptly and feelingly described the 'sickening technique' of Hitlerism.

It was always poor little Germany which was being ill-treated." At the same time, "Hitler was always preaching to Germans that they should forget their inferiority complex which is so often attributed to them." One of Henderson's German interlocutors remarked to him that Hitler's fixation on Germany's inferiority only meant that Hitler possessed it. That was a sentiment shared by Henderson.

While the differences between Xi and Hitler are great and manifold, in this instance they share a common tie. Hitler believed the paradoxical point that the Germans are superior to everyone else and yet everywhere downtrodden. Xi's message is similar.

Xi has a sense of inferiority as he constantly informs the Chinese people that they are great under the CCP, and yet they are weak because they are and have always been taken advantage of by Europeans, Manchus, Mongols, Japanese, Russians, Americans — and even the Soviets, their fellow communists.

Xi makes frequent references in his speeches to the [greatness](#) of Chinese civilization in an effort to enlist its greatness to prop up his illegitimate regime. He has touted the greatness of Chinese history: China has a million years of human history, 10,000 years of cultural history, and 5,000 years of history as a civilization.

China was a leader in the development of ancient civilizations during the neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, and led the world in science and technological advancement. China was the world leader in agricultural technology, gave the world the “[Four Great Inventions](#)” — paper, painting, gunpowder and the compass — as well as lacquer ware, silk, porcelain, iron and steel-making technology, the county system, and the imperial examination system. All certainly true and extraordinary achievements of Chinese civilization.

These themes are perfect examples of Xi’s employment of the greatness of Chinese civilization while simultaneously identifying why this will fail. No matter Xi’s efforts, they will fail as long as China is ruled by an imported Western ideology of [Marxism](#). In this version of history, the “century of humiliation” from the [First Opium War](#) (1839-1842) to the CCP’s [victory](#) in 1949 was a horrible aberration.

Now, under the Chinese Communist Party, and Xi in particular, the People’s Republic of China is poised to regain the position China once enjoyed.

This conveys the historical inevitability about China’s emergence as a superpower and its inevitable victory over the U.S. The narrative that the CCP and Xi advance is significant because it informs the world how they perceive themselves and expect to be perceived — as an eternal hegemonic power and acknowledged as such by all other states. It also shows what they want to hide.

Xi and the CCP are illegitimate and they know that they are. They seek to conceal their illegitimacy from the Chinese people and the world, but by doing so, this reveals their profound insecurities, self-doubts and cognizance of regime malpractices.

Thus, the great insecurity of Xi and the CCP’s conception of China is revealed. Certainly powerful, but not powerful enough — and indeed, not good enough to supplant the West.

To accept socialism — Marxist, Leninist, [Maoist thought](#) — requires the rejection of the greatness of China’s civilization as a foundation for China’s polity.

To accept China’s civilization requires the acceptance of the traditional Chinese polity, imperial rule and the rejection of imported ideologies and polities based on them. The fact that Xi and the Party embrace both means they are simultaneously incoherent and profoundly insecure regarding their legitimacy.

Xi's rule in China has proven that the CCP does not have the solution to creating a modern and just polity. Grafting a Western import to define and govern China was certain to generate ideological and political incoherence for the Chinese people.

Moreover, a fatal flaw of the communist economy is that it is dehumanizing at its root because it is communist. It alienates those unfortunate enough to have it foisted upon them, and so cannot sustain the fealty of individuals. This flaw cannot be eliminated by adding market mechanisms to it or increasing international trade and investment.

Likewise, its politically stifling environment is equally dehumanizing and breeds the fruits of tyranny: oppression, resentment, hatred, mistrust, lies, cynicism and corruption.

The world needs to see Xi Jinping for who he is: an insecure dictator leading a political party that is Western, not Chinese. That alone makes the entire enterprise illegitimate. The Chinese people deserve to be governed by a just government and a political system that is Chinese, rather than a bastardized Western knock-off.

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