

Translated Excerpt



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The following translation is of chapter eight of an official Communist Party guidebook for Xi Jinping Thought. The chapter discusses Xi's view of the evolving world situation. The authors argue that the West is in inexorable decline—hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic—China is on the rise, and China's political system represents the revival of socialism and is a superior alternative to the Western capitalist development model.

Title

The World is Undergoing Great Changes Not Seen in a Century; What are these Changes?
世界正经历百年未有之大变局，变在何处？

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Source

Questions and Answers for the Study of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (《习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想学习问答》), published by Study Press (学习出版社) and People's Publishing House (人民出版社), February 2021, pp. 42-46. Study Press is a publishing house that prints primarily Chinese Marxist theoretical literature for Party cadres; it is run by the CCP Central Propaganda Department. People's Publishing House is the official publisher of the Chinese Communist Party and the PRC government; it mainly prints philosophy and social science books, as well as political and ideological books for Party cadres and government officials.

The Chinese source text is a book; the text is apparently not available online. Please [contact CSET](#) if you'd like to see the original Chinese version.

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8. The world is undergoing great changes not seen in a century; what are these changes?

The world of the 20th century was one of turbulence. The two world wars reshaped the world structure, Western capitalism experienced crises and development, and world socialism passed through highs and lows. From its continuous decline in the modern age, the Chinese nation fundamentally reversed its destiny and continued along the road to prosperity and strength. Today in the 21st century, the world is undergoing great development, profound changes, and major adjustments. General

Secretary Xi Jinping profoundly pointed out that: "Today's world is undergoing great changes not seen in a century." This is the overall strategy of our party based on the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Major judgments will be made through the scientific understanding of general trends in global development and profound insights into changes in the global structure. This is of profound and far-reaching significance for guiding us as we embark on the new journey of building a modernized socialist country in an all-round way and as we win a new victory for socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era.

In brief, the great changes not seen in a century are that the current international structure and international system are undergoing profound adjustments, and the global governance system is undergoing profound changes. The international balance of power is undergoing the most revolutionary change in modern times, and the world presents us with important trends that affect the process and direction of human history. Looking at human history from above, world development has always been the result of the intertwining and interaction of various contradictions. This gives birth to major changes and drives their evolution. From the 15th to the 16th century, with the opening of new shipping routes and the advent of the West's age of exploration, human history took the first step towards a "world-historical" transformation. In the 17th century, major European powers signed the Peace of Westphalia, which enshrined the principle of equality with respect to national sovereignty and established a limited international structure. However, other regions were not yet incorporated into the international system. After the first industrial revolution in the 18th century, human society entered onto the track of accelerated development and the enormous productive forces (生产力) of the scientific and technological (S&T) revolution and the industrial revolution were called into being. This profoundly changed the existing pattern of world development. The backdrop of international systems from the Vienna System in the early 19th century, to the Versailles-Washington system after the First World War, and then to the Yalta system after World War II reflected the evolution and development of great changes to the world. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern

Words of Xi Jinping (习言习语)

➤ Today's world is undergoing great changes not seen in a century. These great changes are not changes in one time or one event, one region or one country, but changes to the world, changes in the times, and changes in history. Can we cope with these great changes? The key is whether we have the wisdom to change, the methods to adapt, and the courage to demand change.

➤ Looking at the world, we are facing great changes not seen in the past century. No matter how the international situation fluctuates, China's confidence and determination to safeguard its national sovereignty and security will not change and China's sincerity and goodwill in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development will not change.

Europe, the bipolar pattern collapsed. The United States became the only superpower, but the world's various forces have continued to grow and develop so that the trend of multi-polarization has become increasingly clear. From its inception, scientific socialism, from theory to practice, from one country to many countries, from navigating twists and turns to rise and rejuvenation, has also profoundly affected the evolution of the great changes to the world. It has led the world to continuously develop in a direction conducive to human progress.

Entering the 21st century, the adjustments due to the great changes to the world present a series of unprecedented new characteristics and new manifestations. The profound changes to the world economic map are unprecedented. The roles of developed and developing countries in the international division of labor system have undergone major shifts, and the economic growth of developed countries has been weak. Emerging economies and developing countries account for an increasing share of the world economy, and the "West-to-East" shift of the world's economic center of gravity is accelerating. The phenomenon of the new replacing the old (新陈代谢) and fierce competition brought about by the new round of S&T revolution and industrial transformation are unprecedented. Not only do they have the power to reconstruct the global innovation landscape and reshape the global economic structure, but they will also profoundly change the methods of production and lifestyles and modes of thinking of human society, promote changes in production relations, and exert extensive and far-reaching influence on the international pattern and international system. Such a revolutionary change in the international balance of power is unprecedented. Developed countries face numerous internal contradictions and their relative strength is declining. A large number of developing countries have risen as a group, becoming an important force with influence on the international political and economic structure. The inadaptability and asymmetry of the global governance system is unprecedented. The international political and economic order dominated by developed Western countries is becoming increasingly unsustainable. The representation and voice of developing countries in international affairs continue to expand, and global governance is increasingly developing in a more fair and reasonable direction. The future and destiny of humanity are shared in an unprecedented manner. Interconnections and interdependencies between countries are more frequent and closer than ever before, and the whole world has increasingly become a community of common destiny for humanity (人类命运共同体) where you are among us and we are among you (你中有我、我中有你).

In the midst of significant global changes, China continues to develop rapidly and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation continues to advance, becoming the main driving force behind the evolution of the world structure. General Secretary Xi Jinping

emphasized that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is an important cause of the great changes not seen in a century. The world is facing great changes not seen in a century, providing major opportunities for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Starting from a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society more than 100 years ago, China gradually developed into the world's second-largest economy and the largest socialist country. Its contribution to world economic growth has exceeded 30% for many years running. China ranks in the 15 leading countries in the world for innovation, and in its role in the S&T revolution, China has transitioned from a follower (跟跑者) and participant to a member of the pack (并跑者) and a game-changer (变革者). China has assumed greater responsibility and speaks out more in the field of global governance, becoming an active advocate of multilateral cooperation. The influence of Chinese civilization on the world is growing day by day, becoming an important force that cannot be ignored in the diversified development of civilizations. More importantly, due to the continuous success of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the marginalization and silence (万马齐喑) of world socialism after the end of the Cold War has been largely reversed and the passivity of socialism in the competition with capitalism has been largely reversed. The superiority of socialism has been demonstrated to a great extent, and socialism with Chinese characteristics has become the pillar of the rejuvenation of world socialism. It can be said that the most prominent feature of the great changes to the world not seen in a century are the "rising in the east and declining in the west" ("东升西降") and the increasing movement of China toward the center of the world stage.

Currently, the great changes to the world not seen in a century have entered a period of accelerated evolution. Peace and development remain the themes of the times, but instability and uncertainty are more prominent. "Brexit" in the United Kingdom, the "Yellow Vests" movement in France, large-scale riots in the United States, and other manifestation of "Disorder in the West" ("西方之乱") continue to be played out. Behind this is the continuous fermentation of the deep-seated impact of the international financial crisis. The gap between the rich and the poor in Western countries continues to widen, spawning political polarization, populism, ethnic conflicts, and other problems. In particular, we must see that the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has become a new variable and catalyst for the major changes to the world not seen in a century. This pandemic is a once-in-a-century event. In addition to negatively affecting the recovery of the weak world economy, more importantly, it has highlighted the serious shortcomings of the international system dominated by Western capitalism, declared the complete bankruptcy of neoliberalism, sped up the decline of international forces, made the trend of "rising in the east and declining in the west" in the international structure more apparent, and promoted the continuous and thoroughgoing development of great changes.

Vertical and horizontal lines do not create a circle, and the many changes of phenomena do not depart from the underlying aim (纵横不出方圆，万变不离其宗). Fundamentally speaking, we are going through great changes not seen in a century. This is the inevitable result of the contradictory movements of the productive forces and the relations of production worldwide and reflects the general trend of the development of human civilization. This great change is the shift from a de facto "hegemonic" (“一家独大”) unipolar world to a multipolar world of collaboration and co-governance (共治). Unilateralism is becoming more and more unpopular, multi-polarization has become an unstoppable trend of the times, and China has become an important force in the process of global multi-polarization. This great change is a shift from a single modernization development path to a plurality of modernization development paths. In the eyes of the world, and especially in the eyes of Westerners, modernization is Westernization. However, the road of socialist modernization pioneered by China has demonstrated a brand-new possibility for achieving modernization. This major change is a transition from severe twists and turns in world socialism to a rejuvenation of scientific socialism in the 21st century. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern Europe, Westerners could not wait to declare that history ended with the capitalist system. However, the result was that the great success of socialism with Chinese characteristics announced the end of the "end of history."

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "Great changes present great challenges and great opportunities. We must make plans in accordance with the situation, act in response to the situation, and behave in harmony with the situation." We must cherish "China's national strengths" (“国之大者”) and establish a correct view of history, a correct view of the overall situation, and a correct view of roles. We must profoundly grasp the dialectical relationship between the great changes in the world not seen in a century and the overall strategy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. We must base ourselves on the overall situation, coordinate with the global situation, lead change, and create a new situation. We must strive to achieve progress, achieve breakthroughs, and achieve victories amid these changes. We must clearly see that the United States and other Western countries will never resign themselves to this and sit back and watch the loss of their dominant position. They will inevitably and deliberately suppress (打压) China using any means necessary (不择手段). We must maintain strategic determination and carry forward the spirit of struggle, never yield to any external pressure, and never swallow any bitter fruit that harms the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation. The more chaotic clouds fly overhead and turbulent waves strike the shore, the more we must remain calm and undisturbed. We must grasp the strategic initiative, give full play to the advantages of our system, and better

lead the great changes to the world in a direction that is conducive to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as well as to world peace and progress.