

Analysis of the Spirit of Struggle in the New Era Based on General Secretary Xi Jinping's New Year's Greetings in the Past Decade

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ABSTRACT

In order to realize the national rejuvenation, General Secretary Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the spiritual strength of struggle, and has repeatedly advocated that all people should exalt the spirit of strive on different occasions. According to his New Year's greetings since 2014, Xi Jinping has illustrated the connotation of the spirit of enterprising, the necessity of carrying forward and the requirements for practicing the spirit of struggle from different perspectives, pointing out that all Chinese must keep in mind both domestic and international situations, strive in unity, work creative and industrious with the enthusiasm of seizing every minute, catch the opportunity and solve the problem, make substantial progress on the new journey to construct China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

1. Introduction

To realize the great national rejuvenation of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has advocated on many occasions that all the people should exert the spirit of endeavor. The 20th report of CPC once again proposed to promote the spirit of struggle and foster customs in the whole society. In the New Year's message Since 2014, Xi has attached much importance to the struggle spirit and called on all Chinese to strive for great rejuvenation with full heart. In view of the special cultural implication of the New Year's greetings, this paper attempts to analyze the essence of the spirit of struggle, why and how to do it, based on the text of Xi Jinping's New Year's greetings in

the recent decade, so as to provide a reference for carrying forward the spirit of struggle in the way to a stronger modern socialist country.

2. Meaning of the Spirit of Struggle in the New Era

Due to inertial thinking, some people are accustomed to linking struggle and arduous struggle with poor and hard times, believing that the principal contradictions have changed with the development of the productive forces, there is no need to emphasize the spirit of struggle. Is that really the case? How should we view it? Xi Jinping's New Year's greetings and related speeches give a "key" to understand it correctly.

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2.1 Struggle is Accompanied by Hardship

Xi Jinping has emphasized repeatedly that the road to a better life is full of hardships, pointing out that “struggle is hard and success only comes through hard work.”^[1] As far as the country is concerned, “to achieve national rejuvenation won’t be an easy task like walking in the park, and it will take more efforts to get there rather than drum beating and gong clanging.”^[2] For the individual, the better life is not living in a greenhouse or a vacuum, the ups and downs are the life itself. In his New Year message of 2024, he once again mentioned “Along the way, we are bound to encounter headwinds.”

2.2 The Struggle is Long-term

Xi Jinping has placed great emphasis on the need to struggle permanently. As far as the country is concerned, China’s development achievements are created by generation after generation of Chinese people who have fought tenaciously with their own hands, and have worked hard and made unremitting efforts. For individuals, on the road to a better life, we must not only face the legacy of “extensive development” of the economy, but also encounter the trouble of disappointing “more expectations” of individuals. More importantly, we must undergo the ultimate test of core competitiveness, and without continuous individual struggle, a better life can only be a utopia.

2.3 Struggle is a Kind of Happiness

In the age of material scarcity, hard struggle is an emergency response for individual survival to a certain extent. After getting rid of the trouble of material shortage, as an upgraded version of hard struggle, struggle is more of a way for individual self-realization. At the 2018 Spring Festival group meeting, Xi Jinping proposed: “Essentially, Struggle equals a kind of happiness. Only a struggling life can be happy and worth living.”^[3] At the same time, he pointed out that “the strivers are rich in spirit, and they are also the people who know and enjoy happiness the most.”^[3]

3. The Necessity of Struggle in the New Era

Whether an era needs to carry forward the spirit of struggle mainly comes from the judgment of countries and individuals on whether the development environment is subject to objective constraints. Entering the new era, from the perspective of the nation, China is facing a development environment of “major transformation unseen in a century”, and facing both “opportunities and challenges”. From the individuals, the satisfaction of the needs for a better life

requires not only external conditions such as political, economic, and cultural, but also the ability of individuals to grasp and enjoy a better life. In short, in the new era, we still need to exalt the spirit of enterprise. In his speech at the New Year’s gathering in 2018, Xi pointed out that the new era belongs to the strivers.

3.1 Meeting the Needs of New Changes in Its International Status

Following the leadership of the Party, people of all ethnic groups have experienced the leapfrog development of standing up, becoming prosperous and strong.

China has also shaken off the embarrassing situation of being weak and poor, achieved the great leap from “catching up with the times” to “leading the times”, playing an important role in the international stage gradually. Great changes in international status are accompanied by the increasing of international responsibilities. On the one hand, with the deepening of globalization, the international political and economic environment is facing many uncertainties. “All parties have both expectations and worries about the prospects for peace and development of mankind.”^[4] “The international community is anticipating hearing China’s claim and seeing China’s solution.”^[5] On the other hand, as a responsible major power on the international stage, China cannot be absent from the reform and construction of the international governance system with the growing strength of its national power. China should make its voice heard on the international stage and share its views of the development for the whole world. To promote regional economic development, China has actively promoted substantial progress in the construction and development of the Belt and Road Initiative adhering to the principle of “mutual assistance, solidarity and common development”. Adhering to the concept of “one world, one family”, China has contributed “Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions” to building a harmonious community with sharing future for mankind. In the future international arena, China needs to contribute to promoting a shared future for mankind with greater developing achievements.

3.2 The Need to Meet New Challenges in Domestic Development

After a long period of development, China’s domestic development situation is facing new challenges. First, reform has entered uncharted waters and a period of tackling tough problems, and any reform may involve major adjustments in interests. All areas are “hard bones” to crack and balancing the relationship between reform,

development and stability is arduous. Second, deepening the development of socialism course with Chinese characteristics stably requires more arduous efforts. Through the relay of generations, the goal of meeting the needs of food and clothing for all Chinese and achieving a moderately prosperous life basically has been completed ahead of schedule. In the report of the 20th National Congress of CPC, Xi pointed out that from now on, the central task of the Communist Party of China will be leading all Chinese working heart and soul unitedly to realize the Second Centenary Goal, which means building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing the Chinese rejuvenation comprehensively with Chinese-style modernization. "Turning blueprint into reality is a new long march."^[6]

3.3 Meeting the People's Needs for a Better Life

Xi has emphasized that "living a happy and better life has always been the persistent dream of mankind in any era."^[7] As the representative of the fundamental interests of all Chinese, it is the bounden responsibility for the Communist Party to realize the people's willingness for a better life. For a long time, due to the relatively low level of productive forces, the primary goal of the government is to meet the growing material and cultural needs of the masses. However, with the development of productive forces and upgrading of comprehensive national strength, satisfying the willing for a better life has a realistic material basis, and it has smoothly become the primary concept of the Party. On the first Chinese and foreign press conference since being elected general Secretary, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party, Xi Jinping solemnly promised: "To satisfy the people's yearning for a better life is our whole goal."^[8] The good life is a constantly developing historical concept, which not only includes the abundance of material life, but more importantly, the enrichment of spiritual life and the manifestation of fairness and justice. In his 2017 New Year speech, Chairman Xi Jinping pointed out that, "Some people still face some problems in employment, education, medical treatment, housing, and so on. It is our unshirkable responsibility to solve all the problems constantly."^[5]

4. The Main Body of Struggle in the New Era

For the Party and Party members and cadres, struggling in the new era is not lonely but an ensemble with the people.

Firstly, the struggle for the new era is inseparable from the participation of all the people. The people are the creators and beneficiaries of a better life. In his 2019 New Year speech, Xi Jinping pointed out that any achievement

today is the result of the hard work of the Chinese people who roll up their sleeves and work hard with sweat^[9]. The difficulties in moving forward require everyone to work together and struggle together. Xi Jinping highly praises the contributions made by workers from all walks of life. In his annual speech, General Secretary Xi Jinping especially gives some people a thumb-up. such as mentioning Wang Jicai, the island keeper, and the courier brother in 2019.

Secondly, the struggle of the new era requires all party members and cadres to Play a pioneer and exemplary role. Essentially, the development blueprint is a political line in all respects. Chairman Mao once said that with the political line determined, the cadres are the primary and decisive factor^[10]. Xi pointed out that achieving the great Chinese rejuvenation needs all the party members to make more arduous efforts. As the image spokesperson of the party, all of the party members and cadres should unite the masses as a whole with a fighting attitude and style. General Secretary Xi Jinping highly affirmed the hard work and enthusiasm of the party members and cadres, pointing out that cadres are fighting hard to promote reform in a way to meet the expectations of people for a better life.

Thirdly, struggling in the new era requires continuous struggle of the young people. Young people are not only the commandos and new force in building a moderately prosperous society, but also an important subject in realizing "the Chinese Dream". Xi noted that to realize the Chinese dream needs generation after generation of aspiring young people to continue to struggle^[11]. General Secretary Xi encouraged young people to temper their youth with dedicated efforts, pointing out that youth is used for struggle. "When young people choose to endure hardship, they choose to reap, and if they choose dedication, they choose nobility."^[11]

5. Requirements for Practicing the Spirit of Struggle

After completing the First Centenary Goal, the Chinese have achieved a tremendous achievement with the closest moment to national rejuvenation. It is necessary for all Chinese to practice struggling spirit to realize the great as scheduled.

First, striving for unity. The grandeur of the blueprint determines the arduousness of the task, and only by uniting can we make good use of opportunities and respond to challenges. In his tenth New Year's greetings, General Secretary Xi Jinping has taken stock of the major achievements made by China every year, pointing out that these achievements are the result of the efforts

of the people. In his speech at the 2022 Spring Festival gathering, Xi further stressed that struggling united is the most prominent spiritual symbol of the Chinese people. He pointed out that the unity formed around a clear goal is the most solid unity, and the struggle relying on close unity is the most powerful struggle.

Second, working is innovative and creative. To meet the best wish for a better life and realize the great rejuvenation, we must fully stimulate the enthusiasm for innovation and creativity of people. In his New Year messages of the past ten years, Xi has listed the significant achievements in scientific and technological innovation, and stressed the importance of carrying out original innovation. In 2016, he stressed the necessity of implementing the new development concept, and making a good start for the decisive stage of building an all-round moderately prosperous society. In 2019, Xi called for sincere respect for all kinds of talents and fully stimulated their innovation and creativity. In 2021, he pointed out that it was the innovation and creativity of all the Chinese people that enabled our country to overcome the impact of COVID-19. In 2024, Xi stressed that it is critical to create a warm and harmonious social atmosphere, expand inclusive and active space for innovation, fully stimulate the entrepreneurship and creativity of people, and inject impetus into Chinese-style modernization.

Third, be down-to-earth and hardworking. In his New Year greetings, Xi Jinping always stresses being down-to-earth and hardworking. For individuals, “no pains, no gains”. As far as the country is concerned, building a high-rise begins with mounds of soil. To translate the blueprint into reality, all Chinese people should avoid the distractions of extravagant ideas and undeserved fame, take one step steadily at every special time, and approach the great course with firm footing. In the 2017 Spring Festival gathering, Xi pointed out that the Chinese have a great spirit of hard work. In his speech at the 2020 Spring Festival gathering, he once again stressed that only by working hard can we secure a decisive victory in constructing a moderately prosperous society in any aspect, fighting poverty alleviation and achieving the First Centenary Goal. In his speech at the 2023 Spring Festival gathering, he further pointed out that the greatest truths are the simplest and hard work is the key. There is no shortcut but hardworking to the great national rejuvenation. It is a long way full of glories and dreams and everyone should work hard honestly and studiously.

Fourth, racing against time and keep striving forward. In human history, China has made an “indelible” contribution to human civilization, but in contemporary times, China has been deeply troubled by internal

and external troubles, delaying a lot of development opportunities and time. Realizing the great rejuvenation needs all Chinese people to solidify the revival of the road at each stage with a high sense of urgency. In his 2020 New Year message, General Secretary Xi Jinping twice emphasized “racing against time” and interpreted it from the perspective of a grand historical view. He pointed out that time waits for no one and history waits for no one. In order to realize the great dream of all national groups, we must race against time and advance with history.

Unity is strength, and struggle achieves great causes. In the past 10 years, General Secretary Xi Jinping not only conveyed the best wishes to the people through his New Year messages, but also issued a mobilization order to unite and strive to build a great modern and powerful socialist country. It also strengthened the whole wisdom of building a modern and powerful country.

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