



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Rise of China in the Historical Context

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History:</p> <p><i>Received:</i> October 28, 2022</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> December 07, 2022</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> December 18, 2022</p> <p>Keywords: CCP, Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, People's Liberation Army, China's Regional Rise</p>	<p><i>To understand the rise of China in the current era, it is important to understand its rise in the historical context, especially, its political, economic, and military history. The article takes the Qing dynasty as a starting point for its study because of its significance as one of the most advanced dynasties in the history of China and because the Qing dynasty represents the larger China of the current era. The internal weaknesses of China led to the incursion of the western powers that ultimately led to the Opium War of 1840, which resulted in an increase in the western sphere of influence in China. China considers it a century of humiliation. The establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 and the China Communist Party (CCP) revolution of 1949 depicts that China wants a complete hold over its territory with no external influence in its domestic affairs. Furthermore, the reforms made by Mao, Deng, and Xi have had an impact on the rise of China. Do all these reforms made in the post-Mao era manifest Chinese expansionist designs as perceived by the western powers and the neighboring countries? The article argues that China's domestic problems would make it less possible to challenge major powers and neighboring countries. The article is descriptive while, enlightening the current Chinese international relations behavior has its roots in the past.</i></p>

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Introduction

The rise of China along with its current status has roots in the past. To understand the rise of China in the current era, it is important to understand it in a historical context, especially, its political, economic, its military history, which must be taken into account. The most important point about the Chinese rise is that it is a revival rather than a new entry on the global stage. Chinese historians have never forgotten about their prestigious past. Practically, the attitude of Chinese emperors had been aggressive in imposing their rule and culture in the north, east, west, and south, but there is also evidence of what is associated with Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power". Chinese culture and political concepts were followed by those who were out of range of their influence. Their culture and system were adopted by the outside powers without any pressure or force. Starting with Shang, who defeated the Xia and ruled northern China from mid fifteen century BCE to Zhou to the last Qing dynasty, China has expanded and risen in all directions. With the brief period of defeat and subjugation after the Opium War of the 1840s, which China considers a century of humiliation, it is again rising and posing questions for many security analysts that need to be answered. Will China again become a dominant power on the international stage? In the historical context, it needs to be determined whether it will be an aggressive or peaceful power. China has criticized imperialism in any form and is justified in this rhetoric.¹

This article takes the Qing dynasty the basis of its research because the Qing dynasty was considered as the most advanced and developed dynasty in the history of China. It was founded in the 1640s to replace the Ming dynasty. It continued to strengthen its roots and expand its frontiers throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. This resulted in the larger China of contemporary times. The philosophy of New Confucius was elevated, and so on. The emperor used to visit his empire, especially the peripheral areas, to become aware of the condition of his people. The Qing dynasty under

¹ Warren I. Cohen, "China's Rise in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4-5 (2007), 683-704, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701431758>.

Kangxi started dealing with westerners who were more advanced than the Chinese and could be troublesome at any time in their relations with the Chinese. After Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to China, the Portuguese started to establish bases in Asia and trade with China. Other Western merchants, like the Dutch and Spanish, proceeded and arrived in China in the last half of the sixteenth century. British, French, and Germans joined China in the later century. Moreover, the internal weaknesses of the dynasty allowed these powers to establish their colonies on the eastern coast of China in the early twentieth century, resulting in the collapse of the Qing dynasty, which was followed by the establishment of the Republic in 1911.

In the Qing era, the Chinese economy was based on agricultural products. Its commerce was so established that the Qing had to establish new cities along the coastal region of southeast China. Milk, clothing, porcelain, printed books, and other related factories were established in the new coastal cities. This gave easy excess to western traders, who were willing to purchase Chinese silk, tea, sugar, porcelain, etc. in silver in exchange for these goods.² The Europeans had nothing else to exchange with Chinese commodities except silver because China was self-reliant in its production and did not require anything to import except silver, an important metal for the Chinese.³

Despite the richness and power of the Qing dynasty, there were many internal weaknesses that led to its collapse in the early nineteenth century. It is important to note that the 19th and the 20th-century, Chinese policies were not merely a response to the external powers; they were also a response to internal problems such as increasing population, corruption, the ineffectiveness of government, and the conflict between the Qing (Manchus) and the Chinese, as well as its Muslim subjects,⁴ Internal rebellions such as those in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Mongolia. The government responded

² Morris Rossabi, *A History of China* (Malden: John Wiley and Sons, 2014).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Maura Elizabeth. Cunningham, *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 25.

to Xinjiang and Mongolia through military means, and the response to the other internal problems ultimately resulted in an increase in expenditures. Thus, the burden on the government increased. Moreover, overpopulation prevented the Qing from developing new technologies, and the government depended on manual labor. Thus, China lagged behind in terms of developing new technologies.⁵

The internal weaknesses of the Qing dynasty allowed the westerners to interfere in the internal affairs of China, which ultimately resulted in the Opium War of 1840–44. This war resulted in an increase in the sphere of influence of the Western Countries. Through the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, Britain got the island of Hong Kong and four ports. The treaty signed with the United States and then with France gave rise to the concept of “extraterritoriality.” Portugal got Macao, and her control continued till 1997, when China reclaimed the island. In sum, the era after the Opium War is considered the “Century of Humiliation” in the history of China and, it officially ended when Chairman Mao announced the establishment of the People’s Republic of China on in October 1949.⁶

In the post-revolution era, three important personalities have played an important role in China’s rise. Starting with Mao Zedong, he was successful to a large extent in unifying Chinese society by adopting the simplified version of Marxism, which suited the Chinese environment. Moreover, he started rapprochement with the United States of America to have good relations with the major powers. For economic uplift, Deng Xiao Peng is considered an important person in the current Chinese history. He was a realistic person who adopted the modernization policy to uplift the Chinese economy. He is considered a reformer in Chinese history, but politically, he was also considered as authoritarian as Mao. His steps normalized their relations with America and gave them permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The revival of Chinese normalization of relations continued in Xi era with his of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era”

⁵ Rossabi, *A History of China*.

⁶ Matt Schiavenza, "How Humiliation Drove Modern Chinese History" *The Atlantic*, February 16, 2017.

and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) became part of the Chinese constitution. Through BRI, China could use conventional economic policies to reach the principal of its grand strategy.

This article studies the rise of China in its historical context and relates it to its current status by creating a linkage between its peaceful rise both in the ancient and present eras.

The Republic and People of Republic China before Independence

The Boxer uprising, which was crushed in 1900, proved to be the last nail in the coffin of the Qing dynasty. They were famous for their anti-Western campaign in which they torched foreigners' homes and churches. And when boxers threatened to harm foreign delegations and were sieged, the situation was alarming. Combined forces then intervened and defeated the Boxers, thus rescuing the legation and punishing the Boxers by looting the city, ultimately humiliating the Chinese.⁷ Having said that, the Qing dynasty introduced some reforms after the Boxer uprising, but they did not work, resulting in the end of the Qing dynasty.

The establishment of the republic is associated with the rebellion that broke out in the city of Wuchang on the 10th of October 1911 and ultimately spread to other parts of the country, which resulted in the abdication of the last Qing emperor, thus, bringing the era of the Qing dynasty to an end. Many Chinese took part in the revolution, and an important personality among them was Sun Yet-Sun, a doctor by profession. Instead of doing work to treat the patients, he was more interested in curing the disease of his land. While he was in Britain, he gave an ideology for his revolution, famously known as "Three Principles of the People." In order to sustain the revolution, Sun lack military skills, so he gave the presidency to General Yuan Shikai in early 1912.⁸ Yuan, whose administration had gone practically against the spirit of the republic

⁷ David Curtis Wright, *The History of China*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 119.

⁸ Wright, *The History of China*, 124.

and converted the state into war Lordism, thus the country was geopolitically divided among different warlords.

To unify China into one state and strengthen the republic in its original form, two united fronts were formed between the Nationalists and the Communists. One was formed when Sun allowed communists to join nationalist forces to defeat warlords and strengthen the republic; the other was against the Japanese. After the first united front ended in 1927, Chiang Kei Shek turned against the communists in order to eliminate them and nominally unite the country. The attacks on each other continued even after 1941, until 1949, when the CCP defeated Chiang Kei Shek's nationalist The Kuomintang (KMT) forces.⁹

As Chiang Kei Shek was targeting the Communists, Mao and his supporters started retreating to the province of Shaanxi, commonly known as the “Long March”. This Long March has great significance in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. Starting in 1934, only 40,000 out of 400,000 were able to reach Yan’an. Few of those who survived the Long March reached to the top of Chinese leadership in the 1980s. By 1936, Mao and his supporters got sanctuary in a strategically important area of Yan’an and remained stationed there till 1945, protected from the attack of KMT and Japanese forces. During the long March, the popularity of Mao was greatly increased that he was given the leadership of the Red Army and permitted to the Standing Committee politburo, the main decision-making body of the CCP. He remained an important member of the Communist party and held command of the Red Army for the rest of his life.¹⁰

The People’s Republic of China after Independence

With the commencement of the Second World War, both the KMT and the CCP again formed a united front and entered the war on the side of the Allies against Japan, which was allied to the Axis power. Soon after the defeat of Japan at the hands of the Chinese and its ally’s western countries, their conflict resumed and took the shape of a civil war, commonly known as the Chinese civil war of

⁹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁰Ibid., 140.

1946-49. This civil war has resulted in the victory of the CCP. Though western countries supported the KMT financially and militarily, it did not stop KMT forces from being defeated. The defeat of the KMT at the hands of the CCP led to the proclamation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, with Mao as its first President. The nationalist KMT forces of Chiang Kai Shek have retreated to Taiwan, and thus a new chapter in the long history of the Middle Kingdom begins.

Political Reforms in Mao Zedong's Era

Mao, a junior communist leader and then Chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC), was a Marxist-Leninist leader, who is considered one of the most influential leaders of the twentieth century. As an official policy of China's ruling communist party, his writings are well-thought-out. He got popular due to the introduction of Marxist-Leninist beyond the Russian border with a version known as "Sinification of Marxism" to suit the Chinese environment. He is remembered as a revolutionary leader who took China out of the decades of civil war, an external rule that unified and gave pride to the people of China. He is considered in China to be replica of both Lenin, a philosopher and originator of the revolution, and Stalin, a strict implementer of the revolution in the domestic context. In addition to this, Mao was also an active first-generation member who had participated in the May 4, 1919, protest against western and Japanese imperialism inside China. When the CCP was founded in 1921, Mao represented a regional delegation from Hunan and attended the first congress. His orientation as a rural man and expertise in guerrilla warfare has allowed him to gain top positions in the Communist Party and the military. He was appointed supreme leader of the CCP in 1945 at the seventh congress of the communist party, and till his death in 1976, he was known as Chairman Mao.¹¹

In terms of political policy, Mao and his communist China party created a modified Russian model known as the "mass campaign". It was the reformed version of "democratic centralism." It included

¹¹ Timothy Cheek, *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010,) 10.

popular consultation and was responsive to any need of the public. Secondly, Mao adopted the idea of a “united front,” a tool that allowed the Communist government to share power with other societal forces. This institutionalization of the “united front” has helped in the durability of CCP rule. The main function of the united front was to take suggestions from the elites of both the national and provincial congresses. Though they gave recommendations to the government, they did not make laws.¹² Moreover, Mao allowed the rectification movement in 1956 to criticize CCP leadership. This permission to criticize was extended to the general public and professionals. This great decision was short-lived, and due to the authoritarian attitude of Mao, the criticism he received was not liked and it impacted the lives and careers of hundreds of thousands of educated Chinese and the party members. Externally, one of the important political decisions taken by Mao was rapprochement with the Americans in 1972. The costs of political decisions taken by Mao to get success were very high, but when he died in 1976, China was on the way to development, a permanent member of the UNSC, and a respected nation at the international level.¹³

Political Reforms of Deng Xiaoping

The death of Chairman Mao brought an end to the strict ideological adherence to Chinese politics. Though his attachment to Marxist-Leninist ideology unified the country, the strict rule could not uplift the economic backwardness of the country. Temporarily, Mao was succeeded by Hua Guofeng, from 1976 to 1978, but he was ultimately replaced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Deng was a realistic person who knew that in order to develop, China must adopt modernization and should move towards a market economy. He presented his idea of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” and allowed foreign direct investment in his country. He was criticized by the hardliners in the communist party, but he was adamant about taking China out of international isolation and uplifting its economy. As Deng rose to power, he had to deal with many domestic and international issues. Domestically, an important issue before him was to relieve his nation from the wrath of the

¹² Ibid., 14.

¹³ Ibid., 12.

Cultural Revolution that brought the country to a point of collapse.¹⁴ As discussed above, the Cultural Revolution that was initiated by Mao in 1966 and continued up until 1976 had meant to purify the anti-revolutionaries. It resulted in the persecution of thousands of intellectuals, doctors, party members, and ordinary citizens.

In the history of China, Deng is considered a reformer, but he did not allow democracy in China. Though he introduced reforms at the economic and societal level, he was yet not ready to compromise on the authority of the communist party. It was evident from his four principles that he had allowed the Chinese to develop in every field except questioning socialism, their rule, party leadership, and Marxism-Leninism. If he allowed democracy to take root, it would make them answerable to the public and could lose their positions. He was of the view that economic and social modernization would not make their way to political liberalization.¹⁵

Deng has been praised for his vision regarding reforms. He gave his reform package, famously known as the “Four Modernization.” These reforms were meant to develop three industries: Science and technology, agriculture, and the military. To develop China in science and technology, Deng sent Chinese students abroad to the west to inculcate in them high-tech education.¹⁶ Moreover, he is also praised for his bold steps regarding foreign policy. He was a person who brought an end to the international isolation of China. Deng continued Mao’s last year’s rapprochement with Americans that had resulted in his visit to the US in 1979 and the normalization of relations with the West. China got permanent membership in the UNSC during his era, and due to its active engagement with the outside world, China became an attractive place for foreign direct investment.

¹⁴ Wright, *The History of China*, 182.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁶ David Goodman, *Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge, 2002), 79.

Political Reforms by Xi Jinping

Xi Jinping, a vibrant and powerful person, was re-elected to the presidency by the National People's Congress on March 17, 2018. He was termed as the Secretary General of the communist party and also as Chairman of Central Military commission before his rise to the Presidency in 2013. Having important portfolios, he tried to consolidate his power and neutralize his opponents under the anti-corruption movement. He was placed on the same list as the founders of modern China. He gave his ideas of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era" and "Belt and Road Initiatives," which then became part of the party constitution.¹⁷

Xi's intentions could be judged through Plenums. A plenum is a place where a party decides its intentions and decisions and informs the people both inside and outside the country. In his note to the conclusion of the third plenum, Xi wrote that only socialism can save China and that reforms could be the best way to develop the country. His explanatory notes have promised sixty pledges of reforms. Different writers came up with the thought that if there is any political program associated with President Xi, it is the explanatory notes, which he wrote at the end of the third plenum. He came up with the different areas that need to be reformed. These range from market to state enterprises, from urbanization to cyberspace, from democracy to judiciary, and from corruption to world troubles, at least eleven core areas of interest were identified to be reformed.¹⁸

Externally, Xi has adopted a very emphatic and active foreign policy posture. In post-1949 China, he is the only leader after Deng who in his first term of office modified both domestic policies and external relations. Unlike his predecessor, he gave foreign policy primary importance. For his China dream to come true, Xi has adopted a policy that could help China's peaceful development domestically and expansion globally. Through BRI, China could

¹⁷ Goh Sui Noi, "NPC 2018: China's Parliament Unanimously Re-elects Xi Jinping as President" *The Straits Times*, March 18, 2018.

¹⁸ Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 151.

use conventional economic policies to reach the principal of its grand strategy. This is well explained by Xi's adoption of the Belt and Road Initiative, which China initiated in 2013.

In order to expand globally, BRI covers about sixty countries and places China in a better position to negotiate agreements, and deals, which could compete with the US-controlled world order. Furthermore, China under Xi is moving fast towards multilateral diplomacy, which was adopted after the Tiananmen incident of 1989, when China faced international isolation. Since Xi rose to the presidency in 2013, he has hosted 10 major regional and global summits in China. These summits in China have resulted in the rise of Xi's status both domestically and internationally. Further, his hosting of global economic summits has also resulted in the establishment of an economic-oriented forum comprising of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa called the (BRICS). Despite China's conflict with India over Doklam, Xi is successful in bringing India to part of it.¹⁹

Economic Reforms in Rising China

China took responsible economic measures which in turn helped China's rapid economic rise both regionally and globally. Today, China has become the second largest economic power after the United States.

Mao Economic Policy

Soon after the revolution, major tasks before Mao were the consolidation of the revolution and, more importantly, revival of the Chinese economy. Initially, some steps were taken to control inflation. This People's Bank was established in 1948; its main task was to check inflation as well as in the Korean War. In order to bring the entire setup under socialist spirit, the ownership of some private businesses was taken by the state entirely and some were run by the joint state and private partnership. The reconstruction was

¹⁹ Zhimin Lin, "Xi Jinping's 'Major Country Diplomacy': The Impacts of China's Growing Capacity" *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 28, No.115, (2019), 31-46.

disturbed due to the ongoing Korean War, yet Mao continued his reforms, including confiscating the lands from the landlords and redistribution among the peasants in the countryside.

Economically, the People's Republic of China had adopted the Soviet-styled five-year plan. It continued from 1953 to 1957 had covered different areas to be developed. These included health, education, agriculture, and industries. Much of the focus was given to the agricultural and industrial sides. The industrial sector was developed with the support of the Soviet Union, while on the agriculture side, Mao planned agriculture collectivization, in which peasants would combine together to produce more efficient output. Resultantly, the experiment was not successful and by 1955 hundreds of these agriculture producers were disbanded.²⁰

As Mao felt uneasy with the insufficiency of the Soviet economic model, he decided to introduce his own concept of the economic model, "The Great Leap Forward." Its main purpose was to continue the collectivized agriculture program to get maximum output, and the output generated from the agriculture sector could be used to develop industrialization. Regarding the development of the agriculture side, CCP implemented the commune system. Thousands of communes were formed. It was estimated that the commune had almost all the land of the country in its possession. The peasants in these communes were allowed some private land to cultivate for household use. The bad harvest of 1958 was the cause of the disaster. As many of the APCs presented fake production reports in order to please the government, the government collected tax on the basis of the data shared by the APCs. Thus, millions of Chinese were famished to death in 1958 as the government was unable to provide food due to a lack of actual data.

The development of the industrial sector was dependent on the output of agricultural products. The profit generated from the agriculture sector was invested to establish small-scale steel industries in the towns. Steel industry output was so poor that it could be considered useless. The starvation that happened during the great leap forward led to the deaths of millions, and China could

²⁰ Alan Lawrance, *China Under Communism* (London: Routledge, 2000), 34-38.

only recover after the 1970s. Mao, in order to strengthen his grip on the government, unleashed the Cultural Revolution.

Deng Xiaoping Economic Policy

Deng was regarded as an important leader among the moderate group. To come out from the disasters of the Great Leap Forward and then Cultural Revolution, Deng adopted pragmatism and modernization to develop China economically. To give relief to his people and to justify his party rule, he allowed individuals to establish private enterprises. Furthermore, to continue with his policy of “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, his government had practically implemented “one Country two systems” by accepting Communism as the political ideology of China and capitalism as the economic policy of the Country.²¹

The popular economic slogan and policy of Deng were based on “Four Modernization.” These four types of modernizations were aimed at developing agriculture, science, technology, industries, and defense. The central argument of Deng’s government was based on economic uplift, not on Mao’s ideological basis. Agriculture was given importance. He abolished the agriculture commune with the family farms and allowed the latter to lease the land from the former. This created a surplus of labor and Deng compensated them by allowing them to create small industries. By establishing light industries in small towns, Deng’s policy was successful in developing small towns as economic centers, as well as preventing the population influx towards larger urban centers.

Another economic policy of Deng’s was the establishment of special economic zones in 1980. These special economic zones provided the opportunity for fewer state regulations to investors. This was first established in the province of Shenzhen and then extended to Macao and Hong Kong. It was dominated by private businessmen. It resulted in an increase in the number of investors by the 1900s. Industries were established with joint ventures. Taxes

²¹ Wright, *The History of China*, 182.

were reduced. It has been said that GDP rose in the 1980s and continued in the 1900s as well.²²

To sum up the economic policy of Deng's era, it can be said that the economic growth of China since the 1980s is between 8% and 10%. Moreover, in terms of purchasing power parity, poverty decreased from 85% in 1981 to 27% in 2004. Since the 1990s, China is in the list of the world's second-fastest economy in the world.²³ This growth has given way to president Xi Jinping, who is making his way to strengthen China economically through his BRI strategy.

Xi Jinping Economic Policy

The economic policy of President Xi Jinping can be well defined under his program of a "community of common destiny for humankind" that believes in the economic integration of the world. It is essentially consistent with CCP policy, which aimed to develop the Chinese economy peacefully; the policy was introduced by the then-Chinese President Deng Xiaoping in 1985. More importantly, President Xi is working on "The China Dream," and through this dream, he wants to make China a middle-income country by 2020. In his note at the conclusion of the third plenum, Xi committed to reform in eleven core areas. In his first term in office, he introduced his commitment to the BRI and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a means to bring an end to peace and development.²⁴

To elevate the Chinese economy and use economic policy as a core of the Chinese grand strategy, Xi introduced the BRI in 2013, which will connect more than sixty countries with the Chinese economy. Through BRI, China will be able to shift its industries to other countries along with their labor and capital. In this regard, Chinese banks are providing huge loans to private corporations, which in turn are exporting Chinese equipment as well as technical staff overseas, thus creating huge opportunities for the Chinese

²² Rossabi, *A History of China*, 394-396.

²³ Paolo Urio, *Reconciling State, Market and Civil Society in China: The Long March Towards Prosperity* (London: Routledge, 2010), 55.

²⁴ "Chinese Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping" *East Asia Forum*, October 21, 2018.

economy. To transfer its industrial capacity, China has agreed to over 13,500 contracts with other countries to build infrastructure, dams, industrial parks, nuclear power plants, etc. Thus, through BRI, not only will China find huge markets, but it will also be able to secure energy routes and can take it as a better alternative to the US-controlled world order.²⁵

Mao's Military policy

The military-related policies of a state are a collection of both its foreign and domestic policies. Chinese military policies in the early years after the establishment of the People's Republic were a reflection of Mao's strategies, which had been in use since the 1930s. Mao influenced both the political and military doctrines of communist China.

In the ruling era of Mao, China had two military doctrines: one was for the defense of mainland China, and the other was for revolutionary warfare. The former was defensive in nature, and the latter was not. The two doctrines were related to Mao and were named "Maoist." The military policy of Mao as it related to the defense of the mainland was defensive in nature, i.e., defense against any possible attack. Under the defensive posture, even a counterattack was launched.²⁶ China's intervention in Korean War was claimed for the defensive purpose to minimize the fallout of the Korean War on Chinese domestic politics.²⁷

While the concept of counterattacks was also claimed to be defensive and have no revolutionary agenda, the classic example here is China's counterattack against Indian positions in 1962. There were three reasons as to why "defensive doctrines" were encouraged by Mao Zedong. First, due to differences with the Soviet Union, the Chinese decided to rely less on Russia for their

²⁵ Lin, "Xi Jinping's 'Major Country Diplomacy': The Impacts of China's Growing Capacity."

²⁶ Ralph L. Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," *Asian Survey* Vol. 8, No.4, (1968), 239-262, (p.3).

²⁷ Donggil Kim, "New Insights into Mao's Initial Strategic Consideration towards the Korean War Intervention" *Cold War History* Vol.16, No. 3, (2016), 239-254.

defense. Second, China feared a war with the United States if the war in Vietnam continued. Third, it was Mao's personality and military thoughts. In Mao's era, people were given prime importance in their ideological and political preparation and then military preparedness. The reason was that wars cannot be won only through military techniques, rather, political consciousness was necessary to win the war. That is why Mao invested in the defensive doctrine to fight protracted warfare if the Americans attacked deep inside Chinese territory.²⁸

Deng Xiaoping Military Policy

As Deng rose to power, he had to face many problems that had been left to him by Mao's legacy. The bloody war with Vietnam in 1979 revealed the manifestations of these flaws. Although he had commanded the Red Army, he was keen to adopt a more pragmatic approach to help China come out of difficult times. His policy was based on the peaceful rise of China and devoted more attention to the economic side as compared to military modernization. He related the development of military modernization with economic development. Furthermore, his policy of economic enhancement and social strength became an important factor in national security. In 1977, he was Chairman of the Central Military Commission, but he reduced the military to his concept of "four modernization." Having said that, Deng allowed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the 1990s to support itself by engaging in economic activities. Thus, the PLA started developing itself only after his rule.

Xi Jinping Military Policy

Since his rise to power in 2012, President Xi has clearly expressed his desire to implement his policy of the "China dream." This policy includes reorganizing the Chinese military so it can exert its influence throughout the region. The 19th CPC meeting has expressed its commitment to certify the party's control over the People's Liberation Army, to make it effective in conflicts, and to reduce its principal decision-making body. The CPC national

²⁸ Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," 4-8.

Congress also reminded the Chinese military to moderate and develop by 2020, and to be fully operational as a great power by 2049.

Xi Jinping is the current General Secretary of the CCP and also works as Chairman Central Military Commission (CMC). He is head of the Central Military Commission that discusses the reforms in armed forces. He believes that in getting the “China dream” real, it is only possible that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) should be loyal to the CCP and the CCP must have complete control over it. For this, President Xi has started a campaign in which under the disguise of anti-corruption, both party members, as well as the military, would be cleaned up, thus allowing him to consolidate his grip over power.²⁹

Under Xi, China is keen to apply military power to disputes that have not been resolved through diplomatic means. As China has developed its military capabilities, it has proclaimed its reclaim over the disputed Senkaku islands. By sending advanced maritime ships and combat aircraft, China has not allowed Japan to nationalize the Senkaku island. More importantly, the issues have not been resolved yet, but they have succeeded in forcing Japan to recognize the disputed nature of the islands.³⁰

While China is stretching its muscles through BRI by investing one trillion dollars in more than sixty countries, the Chinese navy is also stretching its muscles to protect the interests of its country and people abroad. The People's Liberation Navy has begun to develop itself and established its first military base in Djibouti in 2017. Moreover, Chinese analysts think that China first establishes civilian ports and then, when necessary, converts them into military bases. Furthermore, the PLA navy under Xi is committed to the "Bluewater Navy" as soon as it gets involved in the Pacific region.³¹

²⁹ "Understanding China's Military Expansion and Implications for U.S. Policy" *Council on Foreign Relations*, (May 17, 2018).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Matthew Carney, "Xi Jinping Takes Absolute Control of Armed Forces" *ABC News*, October 26, 2017.

Conclusion

The purpose of the article was to look into the history of China on how China rose to the power back in history. This article took the Qing dynasty as the point of study because, as discussed above, manifests the boundaries of current China. What is found in the above discussion and the literature consulted for this article suggests that China has not been an expansionist power since the ancient times. It has only claimed what it considers its area since then. The article further suggested that the military modernization by China especially its tilt towards the blue water navy is to protect its sea lane trade routes from sabotaging by the major powers.

It is said that the peak period of China during the Qing dynasty, which vanished with the collapse of the Qing dynasty paved the way for the establishment of the People's Republic of China by Mao Zedong in 1949. It was followed by the unprecedented economic rise since 1978 that ascended China to the second largest economy in the world. Militarily, China did not develop in Mao and Deng eras because the former stress on ideology and the latter economic development slowed down the modernization of the Chinese military.

The post-Deng era especially the Xi era has focused much on the development of the Chinese military and it wants the Chinese military capable to take care of its trade in the East China sea, the South China sea, and the Indian Ocean region. While China is still on the rise, some have associated this rise as a threat to the neighboring powers and to the Western powers, but some are of the view that China's domestic problems would make it less possible to challenge the neighboring countries. It is undeniable fact that China's influence is increasing at regional and international levels, the focus on Chinese development in the light of its history suggests that Chinese policy is to strengthen itself domestically and to make its neighborhood less threatening to her.