

In his speech announcing the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Mao Zedong famously proclaimed, "Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up." With those words, Mao explained that a new era had begun for China under CCP leadership. To those unfamiliar with Chinese history, such a proclamation may seem confusing. Didn't China have 5,000 years of a glorious and storied history? What did China have to be insulted or humiliated about? To whom was China standing up?

This essay answers these questions from the perspective of the CCP's historical narrative associated with China's so-called "Century of Humiliation." The span of history between the start of the First Opium War (1839) and the PRC's founding at the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War (1949) was an era during which the people of China experienced tremendous social upheaval due to both domestic and foreign factors.

The rest of this essay discusses ways that the official narrative regarding the Century of Humiliation continues to be used by the CCP to validate its own political legitimacy and to inform domestic and foreign policy decisions. Over the past decade, the CCP has refined a highly nationalistic historical narrative that emphasizes past injustices inflicted by foreign powers on China. It has used this interpretation to justify severe responses to foreign actions that it perceives as blatant violations of its sovereignty, threats to its territorial integrity, or insults to the Chinese people.

# The National Humiliation Narrative

## Dealing with the Present by Fixating on the Past

By Mark Metcalf



### A Traditional View of History

Chinese people take a great deal of cultural pride in what China has accomplished over the span of its dynastic history. While traditional histories include events prior to 3000 BCE, much of what is included in such histories are accounts of folklore, mythical beings, and legendary rulers. Chinese historical records gradually became more substantial during the first millennium BCE, comprising incomplete annals and associated commentaries. However, it was not until the second century BCE that Sima Qian compiled the first comprehensive history of China—to a large extent based on existing traditional histories. While the historical record may be incomplete, domestically there is a commonly accepted understanding of the events that constitute China's history, a view perpetuated in public education.

In addition to the historical details, traditional Chinese understandings regarding the role of history in society, the trajectory of history, and responsibility (or authority) for maintaining and interpreting the historical record affect the ways that histories are perceived.

As early as the Zhou dynasty, history has been imbued with a didactic role. What is recorded in historical records was selected for its utility in teaching future generations about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. As many of the earliest histories are notoriously fragmentary, understanding how to *correctly* interpret historical events on the basis of scholarly consensus as compiled in commentaries is equally important. Also, given the subtlety, indirectness, and format in histories,

Chairman Mao Zedong announcing the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Source: *Wikimedia Commons* at <https://tinyurl.com/jk25445>.

According to the traditional Chinese interpretation, history comprises a progression of dynasties (the “dynastic cycle”).



Imperialism 1900: The bear represents Russia, the lion Britain, the frog France, the sun Japan, and the eagle the United States. Source: Wikimedia Commons at <https://tinyurl.com/y597edam>.

knowing how to “read between the lines” is an important skill. For example, while an account may appear to praise a ruler’s actions, an educated reader would realize that it is actually criticizing the ruler because the format of the account does not conform to convention.<sup>1</sup>

History also follows a distinctly cyclical trajectory, with leadership based on the Mandate of Heaven. In this context, “Heaven . . . represented the supreme divine force . . . whose support was essential for a given king to reign.”<sup>2</sup> According to the traditional Chinese interpretation, history comprises a progression of dynasties (the “dynastic cycle”). Each dynasty is established by a virtuous ruler, whose successors over time become increasingly inept, corrupt, and/or unresponsive to people’s needs, until finally being overthrown by a righteous ruler, in turn establishing a new dynasty. Although China’s last dynasty, the Qing, ended in 1911, some view the establishment of the PRC as a new Chinese dynasty—with all the strengths and weaknesses that such a comparison entails.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, given the important role of histories in imbuing and maintaining societal values, the government has primary responsibility for maintaining and interpreting the historical records. As such, when a new dynasty assumes power, it has the right to edit and reinterpret previous versions of history in order to conform to the rulers’ desires. Traditional heroes can even be transformed into villains, as in the case of China’s first emperor, Qin Shihuang (r. 221–210 BCE). While initially revered as the “Great Unifier” of the nation, he was recast in the subsequent Han dynasty as the evil emperor who “burned the books and buried the Confucian scholars alive.”<sup>4</sup>

#### The CCP and the Historical Narrative

Such perceptions of history are evident in present-day China, where the CCP is the primary curator of China’s history. The historical narrative is carefully crafted to constantly reiterate the CCP’s redemptive role for China’s people, transforming from a feudal state toward the glorious path of “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” The official historical narrative is also meticu-

lously crafted to highlight the wisdom of the CCP’s past and present actions. In short, the historical narrative is used to legitimize CCP authority. Accordingly, CCP successes are highlighted, and its failures (if not ignored) are rationalized. Given the narrative’s importance, it is understandable that heterodox narratives are suppressed and individuals promoting such misrepresentations are punished. For example, in recent years, the PRC has criminalized the act of questioning the official accounts of the party’s revolutionary heroes.<sup>5</sup> History is a topic that is simply too important to entrust to those having a different perspective.

In spite of the CCP’s ironclad one-party control of the PRC and its people, the party maintains such power under a de facto fiduciary relationship. The people submit to CCP rule in the expectation



### *Since the founding of the PRC, a key component of the CCP's historical narrative has been China's so-called Century of Humiliation.*

that the CCP will do what is best for China and its people. As a result, it is incumbent on party officials to carefully control the message (and the media messengers) so that the Chinese people are aware that, due to enlightened and munificent CCP leadership, their lives have never been better.<sup>6</sup> Thus, control of the Chinese people is of paramount importance to the CCP's survival, and the party carefully monitors available sources of information to identify sources of popular dissatisfaction or, worse, CCP resistance. One of the lessons of Chinese history, particularly the concept of dynastic cycles, is the importance of identifying and responding to a dissatisfied populace. Rulers who do not listen to the people are eventually replaced by those who do.

One of the key challenges of such an approach to control is that some elements that affect domestic Chinese perceptions are not under the CCP's direct control: specifically, the actions of international actors that go against CCP policies. In spite of the CCP's tight control of external communications (e.g., media, internet), such measures remain semipermeable, and the Chinese people are exposed to information that doesn't conform to the party's desires. In many such cases, the CCP responds by simply publicly refuting such actions. In other instances (e.g., when China's honor is offended), specific CCP actions are expected (or demanded). For the party, not to respond would dishonor China, result in a loss of international "face" for the Chinese people, and reflect a loss of domestic "face" (and political credibility) for the party.<sup>7</sup>

#### **China's Century of Humiliation and the China Dream**

Since the founding of the PRC, a key component of the CCP's historical narrative has been China's so-called Century of Humiliation. Beginning with the First Opium War (1839) and concluding with the CCP's 1949 victory over Chinese Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek in the Chinese Civil War, the account depicts China's exploitation at the hands of foreign states and the inability to adequately respond due to the ineptitude of China's leaders.<sup>8</sup> Mistreatment by foreigners resulted in China's being disadvantaged in "unequal treaties," impoverished by outrageous indemnity payments, territorial



July 21, 1842, British troops capture Zhenjiang in the last major battle of the First Opium War. Source: *Wikimedia Commons* at <https://tinyurl.com/y3xfmscw>.



August 29, 1842, the signing of the Treaty of Nanking—the first of what the Chinese later called the "Unequal Treaties"—on board the *HMS Cornwallis*. Source: *Wikimedia Commons* at <https://tinyurl.com/y59jyr5e>.





Chinese Generals from Pyongyang Captured Alive by Migita Toshihide, October 1894. Collection of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Source: *Wikimedia Commons* at <https://tinyurl.com/yxx3kbhs>.



In this French rendering, Queen Victoria glares at the German Kaiser, while the Russian, French, and Japanese figures look pensively at China. The Kaiser stabs his knife into the German-leased territory Jiaozhou (Kiao-Tcheou) in Shandong, acquired in 1898, while the Russian Tsar puts his fists on Port Arthur (the Chinese port of Lüshun, leased in 1897). The caption reads: "China: The Cake of Kings and Emperors." From the 1898 French periodical *Le Petit Journal*. Source: *MIT Visualizing Cultures* at <https://tinyurl.com/y5ynsp5>.



December 18th, 1937, Japanese navy land forces in Nanking. Source: *Wikimedia Commons* at <https://tinyurl.com/yxthmfn6>.

losses (e.g., Hong Kong, Macao), and violations of its sovereignty. The scope of this national and cultural debasement was monumental, including (1) the establishment of over fifty so-called "treaty ports," extraterritorial maritime enclaves on Chinese soil, between 1842 and 1911;<sup>9</sup> (2) the transfer to Japan of areas in Shandong Province, previously German concessions, under the Treaty of Versailles in 1919;<sup>10</sup> and (3) the horrific Nanjing Massacre, perpetrated by the Japanese Army in 1937, which resulted in tens of thousands of Chinese casualties.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to China succumbing as a victim at the hands of numerous international actors, domestic factors also contributed to the situation, including government corruption, a sense of self-satisfied isolationism, and military forces whose capabilities were technologically decades behind those of the West and Japan. Even after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, China experienced nearly four decades of domestic unrest, a Japanese occupation, and civil war before the PRC's establishment.

During the four decades following Mao's declaration of China's reawakening, the historical narrative was used to emphasize the CCP's singular and salvatory role in the lives of the Chinese people. After the June 1989 Tiananmen incident, however, the narrative was modified to specifically underscore China's victimization by the West and Japan.<sup>12</sup> Following a period of post-1989 isolation, the Century of Humiliation became a key historical narrative for the CCP and was used to motivate and encourage Chinese citizens to reclaim China's past glory and its rightful place in the world.

The CCP's historical narrative is promulgated throughout Chinese society via the process of "patriotic education"—a carefully curated curriculum that begins in elementary school and is omnipresent in not only party education, but also in the CCP-controlled media. It is designed to instill a love of country and sense of nationalistic pride. In 2013, CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping further applied the lessons of the historical narrative by introducing the "China Dream"—"the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people." As Xi explained it, the CCP advocates for a return to China's glorious past, moving the Chinese people from humiliation to a resurgence. The CCP was forging the path for China to reclaim its former glory and returning China to its rightful place in the world—a position of leadership. For example, the PRC claims that its ambitious One Belt, One Road Initiative is based on the ancient Silk Road that linked China with the West.

Political anniversaries also play an important role in the CCP's rejuvenation narrative. Significant milestones are commemorated with highly choreographed agitprop, such as the decennial National Day military review in Beijing, and used to underscore the CCP's vital role in China's achievements. It will be interesting to see if this narrative continues as the PRC approaches its first two centenaries: the CCP's founding (2021) and the establishment of the PRC (2049). Will the Century of Humiliation continue to maintain a current significance in patriotic education, or will the perpetual victim (finally) become a victor?<sup>13</sup>

### The Scope and Influence of the National Humiliation Narrative

In recent years, the influence of the national humiliation narrative has become increasingly apparent in China's international and domestic actions. The CCP has aggressively responded to perceived offenses by foreign entities who have "offended the Chinese people," be they governments, companies, or even individuals, with public criticism, threats, and punishment. Domestically, the party has regularly mobilized Chinese netizens to respond to such transgressions with orchestrated rage and threats of boycotts.<sup>14</sup> In most cases, the PRC has unapologetically relied on the national humiliation narrative to justify its actions. Key to such actions are accusations that foreign entities are not respecting China's territorial integrity, sovereignty, or rights to development.

### PRC Territorial Claims

Chinese leaders remain extraordinarily sensitive to what they perceive as threats to (or even disrespect of) China's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Given the loss of territories ceded to foreign powers during the Century of Humiliation, the PRC is moving forward with efforts to maintain or "reclaim" territories that it asserts are (or have been) Chinese territory. Whether such actions are considered as active (e.g., support for Taiwanese autonomy) or passive (e.g., including separate selections for "China" and "Hong Kong" on a website) transgressions, all are considered to be a direct affront to the PRC, which the CCP will not tolerate.

## South China Sea

The PRC's claim that nearly the entire South China Sea (SCS) has historically belonged to China continues to be a source of tension with its neighbors, six of whom (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Việt Nam) have competing territorial claims with China. The Chinese claim is inconsistent with the internationally accepted definition of territorial waters. The PRC argues that its claim is based on a range of evidence, including (1) the assertion that Chinese people have been fishing in the SCS for centuries, (2) that the voyages of Ming dynasty explorer Zheng He occurred throughout the SCS, and (3) a twentieth-century map that includes a so-called "nine-dash line" depicting Chinese territorial waters. To physically assert its claims, the PRC methodically destroyed several reefs and atolls throughout the SCS and then used them as foundations for man-made "features" (e.g., islands), many hosting a runway capable of supporting military aircraft. When the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled against the PRC's SCS claims in 2016, Xi Jinping declared that "China's territorial sovereignty and maritime interests in the waters would not, under any circumstances, be affected by the verdict."<sup>15</sup>



In 2013, China embarked on a massive construction project, expanding seven reefs in the Spratlys into large artificial "islands." Source: *South China Morning Post* at <https://tinyurl.com/y6gpnm7e>. Photo by *People's Daily*.

## Taiwan

Considering Taiwan an indisputable Chinese province and rejecting all claims of Taiwanese independence, the PRC threatens, if necessary, to use military force to resolve the issue. The island was ceded to Japan by China in 1895 as a consequence of the Sino-Japanese War and returned to the Republic of China, led by Chiang Kai-shek, in 1945, ultimately becoming the seat of the Nationalist Chinese government after its defeat by Communist forces in 1949. From 1949 to 1979, the government of China on Taiwan (i.e., the Republic of China) was recognized by the United States as the legitimate government of China.

When the US formally recognized the PRC as the government of China in 1979, the PRC began to more forcefully assert its claim to Taiwan. In its One China Policy, the PRC states that there is only one China and Taiwan is a province of China (and subject to PRC rule). While the US acknowledges this PRC policy, it has not accepted the PRC's interpretation and has continued to unofficially treat



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July 24th, 2019, hoping the world would notice, football fans protested against the Hong Kong extradition bill during a friendly football game at Hong Kong Stadium.

Source: Alamy/HKPhotoNews. Photo by Isaac Lawrence.

Taiwan as a separate nation. Under the terms of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, the US continues to provide a “defensive” weapons system to Taiwan and “to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.”<sup>16</sup> Ongoing American political support for Taiwan President Tsai Ying-Wen has also garnered the PRC’s criticism. On the basis of the CCP historical narrative, US actions are regarded as interfering with both the PRC’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### Hong Kong

Political demonstrations resulting from a proposal to establish an extradition treaty between Hong Kong and the PRC during the summer of 2019 were consistently interpreted by the PRC through the lens of the CCP historical narrative. Regardless of the fact that hundreds of thousands

of peaceful protesters took to the streets to express dissent, such demonstrations were consistently reported in CCP media as the actions of those lacking sufficient patriotic education or instigated by the “black hand” of foreign agitators. From the CCP’s perspective, that Hong Kong residents are resisting their guidance is anathema, and foreign entities who encourage such actions encourage sedition.

Hong Kong is a particularly important circumstance because the territory was returned to China by the United Kingdom in June 1997. Accordingly, a successful Hong Kong is validation of the CCP historical narrative regarding the appropriateness of the PRC’s claim to former Chinese territories. In contrast, resistance to CCP guidance reflects poorly on the CCP and sends the “wrong” message to the Chinese people (i.e., resistance is *not* futile). Hong Kong continues to be governed under a “one country, two systems” framework, so the CCP is particularly sensitive to claims that Hong Kong is not part of the PRC. As of June 2020, the CCP’s decision to approve a sweeping national security law for Hong Kong, in direct response to the 2019 demonstrations, is considered by the party to be a reasonable

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*In October 2019, Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey tweeted, “Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong” on his personal Twitter account. He then deleted the tweet, but the damage had been done.*

response to those who would challenge CCP sovereignty or encourage “separatism” to the detriment of China’s territorial integrity and political governance.<sup>17</sup>

### “Insulting the Chinese People”

The PRC takes a very hard line toward foreign entities that appear to ignore or criticize Chinese assertions regarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. While these topics are catalysts for action, the actual offense seems to be not taking the PRC seriously, sometimes characterized as “insulting the Chinese people.”<sup>18</sup> Much of the time, the CCP appears to have a hair trigger when it comes to identifying foreign infractions. For example, when Marriott International included both “China” and “Taiwan” as selections in a webpage reservations menu, the PRC ordered that company’s China website to shut down for a week.<sup>19</sup> In another case, when clothing manufacturer The Gap did not include Taiwan on a map of China, the CCP mobilized netizens to express outrage and threaten a boycott.<sup>20</sup> There have also been times when offensive social media posts have been blocked within the PRC, and yet netizens are somehow given access to the forbidden material to express outrage, making it appear that the CCP is simultaneously lighting the fire and fanning the flames.

In October 2019, Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey tweeted, “Fight for freedom. Stand with Hong Kong” on his personal Twitter account. He then deleted the tweet, but the damage had been done. The CCP mobilized PRC netizens, and within hours, the Chinese internet was ablaze with demands for Morey’s firing. Concurrently, the Chinese broadcaster canceled scheduled Rockets games, advertisers canceled contracts, and NBA exhibition games scheduled later that month were canceled. From the CCP’s vantage, there was no alternative. Hong Kong was in the midst of political protests challenging CCP authority—actions that had not escaped the attention of the Chinese people. The general manager of a foreign basketball team, one very popular in China, had just given his support to the renegades. Were the CCP not to respond, its domestic credibility would have suffered. Once again, the CCP narrative was used to criticize foreigners who supported “separatism” and inappropriately dishonored China’s sovereignty. Seven months later, with the situation still unresolved, NBA China attempted to ameliorate the situation by appointing a Chinese national as their president. Within hours, a commentary in the *Global Times*, a CCP tabloid, reiterated that until Morey was fired, the NBA ban would continue.<sup>21</sup>

### China’s Naval Strategy

Since the mid-1980s, China has actively been working to define a naval strategy and to improve the capabilities of the PLA Navy (PLAN).<sup>22</sup> The CCP humiliation narrative has been extensively used to provide justification for such activities:

*The history of the Century of Humiliation of the Chinese race continually tells us that foreign races invade via the sea. Experience repeatedly reminds us that gunboats emerge from the Pacific Ocean; the motherland is not yet completely unified; the struggle over sovereignty of the [islands] . . . still continues . . . We must build a strong navy to guard territorial integrity, and to protect national maritime rights and privileges.*<sup>23</sup>

The “China’s Recent Maritime Defense Strategic Thought and Sea Power Concepts” chapter in *China’s Historical Strategic Thought*, a PLA Academy of Military Science (AMS) textbook, presents the history of the Century of Humiliation and explains its three key lessons for China’s maritime strategy:

1. The primary threats to China during this period were from the sea. China needs a strong and capable navy to protect against maritime threats. It is unlikely that China would have been repeatedly defeated by more powerful foreign navies had its navy been capable.
2. Chinese naval supremacy requires technological superiority. As China’s archaic navy engaged technically superior, state-of-the-art foreign navies, the results were foreordained.
3. China’s maritime strategy should be determined by naval experts. During the nineteenth century, China’s inadequate maritime strategy was shaped by specialists in land warfare; the advice of maritime experts was ignored.<sup>24</sup>

### Observations

A recent opinion piece in the *South China Morning Post* suggests that it is time for China to abandon the Century of Humiliation narrative:

*. . . Beijing must undergo a thorough foreign policy review, elevate its manner of relating to others, and start deprioritiz[ing] old grudges. Adjustments need to be made often; China seems unduly*



Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey. In October 2019, Morey’s comments on Twitter supporting the Hong Kong protests caused tensions between the NBA and PRC. Morey later deleted his tweets and issued a public apology. Source: Wikipedia at <https://tinyurl.com/y45d34h2>





PLA Navy Type 054A frigate (Jiangkai II class). Source: *Wikipedia* at <https://tinyurl.com/yxlm8q2>

and neurotically self-cent[er]ed. If it wants to leave the Century of Humiliation behind, it could stop living in the past.<sup>25</sup>

While certainly a noble suggestion, this is not the reality experienced by the CCP. While a rejection of the narrative might broaden the PRC's perspective on international matters, to do so would not be in the best interests of the CCP—an organization that relies on the Century of Humiliation narrative for its very existence. To understand the ways that the PRC behaves is to understand the Century of Humiliation narrative. ■

## NOTES

1. François Jullien addresses the importance of this type of rhetorical indirection in Chinese literature in his *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 55–73. He explains that even poetry was traditionally “read with a watchful eye . . . suspected of hiding beneath its innocent airs a less acknowledged [political] intention” (68).
2. Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), 41.
3. Belal Ehsan Baaquie and Wang Qinghai, “Chinese Dynasties and Modern China: Unification and Fragmentation,” *China and the World: Ancient and Modern Silk Road* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–43. Referring to the current government as the “Red dynasty,” the authors explain how the PRC has overcome the limitations of earlier dynasties. While the arguments are far from compelling, it is noteworthy that the analysis is based on a dynastic framework—a model that undergirds the authors’ understanding of Chinese history.
4. *Fen shu keng ru* is a fixed expression that summarizes the actions purportedly taken by the Qin emperor, as described in Sima Qian’s *Shi Ji* 6, to remove perceived threats to his rule. Many modern historians doubt the veracity of such accounts. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 55, 58.
5. “China Criminalizes Defamation of Revolutionary Heroes,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 27, 2018.
6. During a February 2016 speech to Chinese state broadcasters, Xi Jinping reminded them that “all news media run by the party must work to speak for the party’s will and its propositions, and protect the party’s authority and unity.” Edward Wong, “China’s President on the Role of Media,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2016.
7. In “National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2008): 800, Zheng Wang explains how the CCP has, on occasion, been forced to balance the requirements of international relations with the nationalistic demands of domestic stakeholders.
8. Zheng Wang’s *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) presents a detailed discussion of the Century of Humiliation and the role of the humiliation narrative in CCP propaganda and policymaking. The first chapter of George Magnus’s *Red Flags: Why Xi’s China Is in Jeopardy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 14–29, provides a more concise overview of the topic.
9. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), 159–162, 180, 220–223.
10. Spence, 293.
11. Spence, 448–449.
12. Zheng Wang (2008), 784.
13. My sincere thanks to an anonymous reviewer who addressed this thought-provoking issue in their comments.
14. Such campaigns are frequently in response to perceived offenses that have occurred on internet services outside of China that are actually banned in the PRC—such as Twitter.
15. “Full Transcript: Interview with Chinese President Xi Jinping,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 2015. China also used the decision to activate its humiliation narrative, arguing that the Japanese judge who appointed the Permanent Court of Arbitration issued a biased decision because four of its five judges were appointed by “[r]ightist, hawkish, pro-American, unfriendly to China” Japanese diplomat Sunji Yanai. “People’s Daily Unmasks Manipulator behind South China Sea Arbitration,” *People’s Daily Online*, July 19, 2016.
16. Taiwan Relations Act, <https://tinyurl.com/y6tz5yd8>.
17. Ng Kang-chung, Lilian Cheng, and Tony Cheung, “National Security Law: Hong Kong Police’s Sweeping New Powers Include Warrant-Free Raids and Ordering Internet Firms Such as Facebook to Remove Content,” *South China Morning Post*, July 7, 2020.
18. The CCP considers itself to be the sole representative of the opinions and sensibilities of “the Chinese people.” From the CCP viewpoint, “to serve the people” is a key element of its duties. It is only logical that it alone has that unique understanding of the Chinese people writ large.
19. Benjamin Haas, “Marriott Apologiz[es] to China over Tibet and Taiwan Error,” *The Guardian*, January 12, 2018.
20. Karoline Kan, “‘Insulting China’ and the Business of Fomenting Online Rage,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, September 8, 2019; Jeanne Whalen et al., “China Lashes Out at Western Businesses as It Tries to Cut Support for Hong Kong Protests,” *The Washington Post*, October 8, 2019.
21. Deng Xiaoci, “Naming Native Chinese as NBA China Boss ‘Not Enough’ to Win Mainland Market Back,” *Global Times*.
22. See Mark Metcalf, “Humiliation Is Prologue,” *Naval History Magazine* (April 2019), 42–47 for a more thorough discussion of the significance of the humiliation narrative in PRC strategic planning.
23. William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29, no. 2 (2004): 211–212.
24. Yu Rubo and Liu Qing, “Lectures on China’s Historical Strategic Thought” [*Zhongguo Lidai Zhanlue Sixiang Jiaocheng*] (Beijing: Academy of Military Science Press, 2013), 201–212.
25. Tom Plate, “Xi Jinping’s China Needs a Foreign Policy Worthy of the ‘Asian Century,’” *South China Morning Post*, May 19, 2020.

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