

CLEAR PATH:

Reforms will see China take its place as one of the 'world's great powers'

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Since then, nearly 86 million cases have been concluded, with 120 officials at or above vice-ministerial level being investigated, including former Political Bureau Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang, who has since been imprisoned for life.

Investigations have until now been carried out by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which until October was headed by Wang Qishan.

However, it was only able to investigate Party officials, while the new supervision commission — because it is a State body — will also be able to investigate those outside the Party who might attempt to offer bribes or inducements to officials in return for favors.

President Xi had told an NPC meeting on March 9 that he wanted to keep the political ecology of China clean.

He told a panel of lawmakers from Southwest China's Chongqing municipality that a political ecology was similar to a natural ecology because both can be polluted easily and rehabilitation comes at a high cost.

Victor Gao, a leading China commentator and former interpreter for China's former leader Deng Xiaoping, said the setting up of the supervision commission is a very important move in the fight against corruption.

"It means that those offering the bribes can also be investigated, and not just the Party officials who take the bribes. It really levels the playing field in the fight against corruption," he said.

"Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan in his role as secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection have shown that they not only talk the right talk, but also walk the right walk. This is a very important problem that has needed to be tackled in China for some time."

Wang Huiyao, founder and president of the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based independent think tank, said the new agency has an important role.

"It is another example of the separation of power within our governance system. You have the Party, the government and now the supervisory system, as well as market forces. It all adds to creating checks and balances," he said.

"Corruption had become an endemic problem and harder to control and contain. China has become very sophisticated and it needs a sophisticated system of regulation," Wang added.

Martin Jacques, a British academic and author of *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global*



Aides distribute ballots to deputies to the 13th National People's Congress before they cast their votes on proposed amendments to the Constitution on March 11 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. XU JINGXING / CHINA DAILY

Order, an internationally best-selling book about China's rise, said clean government is important for a system such as China's.

"The Chinese leadership deserves a lot of credit for the anti-corruption campaign. I was at a conference in Beijing a few years ago, which was attended by Wang Qishan, where Thabo Mbeki spoke.

"I remember the former South African president saying that corruption was not just about the takers but the givers, and this is what this new agency addresses."

The changes should not come as any surprise, said Hans Hendrichke, professor of Chinese business and management at the University of Sydney.

He said China is undergoing profound economic and social reform, and the recent constitutional changes will ensure those reforms, such as the restructuring of central and local governments, are carried through.

China's commitment to the path of peace and development, mutual benefits, win-win cooperation, opening-up, and building a community with a shared future for mankind were also written into the Constitution.

"The Chinese leadership deserves a lot of credit for the anti-corruption campaign."

MARTIN JACQUES
British academic and author

According to academic Michael Peters, writing in the *Educating Philosophy and Theory Journal*, Xi Jinping Thought has systematically addressed the major question of our times — the form and principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era.

Peters, professor of education at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, said Xi Jinping Thought "represents a pragmatic reading adapting Marxism to the Chinese context ushering in a new era of China's socialist modernization and governance based on strengthening the Party".

The amendment now places Xi Jinping Thought with other guiding theories including Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Theory of Three Represents.

The national legislature also wrote into the Constitution that "the leadership of the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics".

That new sentence reflects the fundamental, comprehensive and contemporary nature of the Party's leadership, said Shen Chunyao, chairman of the Commission for Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee.

The Party's leadership was included in the first article of the Constitution as the Party exercises overall leadership in all areas of endeavor in every part of the country, Shen

said at a news conference on the revisions.

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is the latest achievement in adapting Marxism to a Chinese context and encapsulates the practical experience and collective wisdom of the Party and the people, Shen said.

The inclusion of Xi Jinping Thought and the Scientific Outlook on Development ensures that the country's guiding theories will advance with the times, Shen added.

Lu Xi, assistant professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, said China's constitutional amendments have "more positives than negatives".

He told *China Daily Asia Weekly* that under Xi's new policies, government interests are no longer compatible at different tiers of government, especially in key reform areas such as social equality, pollution control and poverty alleviation.

"Implementing these policies won't bring tangible benefits to local governments in the short run but will aggravate their fiscal burden.

"That is to say, the old way of

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