

# Building a Harmonious Socialist Society under the Vision of Modernization

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## Abstract

Modernization is the theme of historical development in China in the modern society. Socialist modernization is a mode innovation under the particular historical condition that capitalism modernization has been formed, harmony is the essential feature of socialist modernization. Constructing a harmonious socialist society is the internal demand and important strategy to promote the progress of Chinese modernization.

**Keywords:** Harmonious socialist society, Chinese modernization, Internal demand, Important strategy

Modernization is the theme of historical development in China since the modern society and harmony is the essential feature of socialist modernization. Construction of a harmonious socialist society is an important strategy proposed with a view to the new situation and new task faced up by modernization in China.

## 1. Modernization is the theme of historical development in modern China

Modernization is a development process which is undergone by almost all countries in the world either initiatively or passively. "In the new global economic entity constituted by modern national states, economic and cultural factors in rapidly developed society has strong conductivity to slowly developed society, while the spontaneous international competitive mechanism makes this conductivity become a conscious development rule, which leads to a particular propagation effect that is different from general cultural propagation, namely, "modernization effect". As a result, strong social transition of adaptation is caused." (Luo Rongqu, 2004) Ever since the second half of the Twentieth Century, modernization has become a great wave of global transform. "Any society is ever a traditional one, while any society in the contemporary world is either a modern society, or is becoming a modernized society." (C. E. Black, 1988)

After 1840, the traditional development track of China was smashed and the situation emerged which was characterized by large-scale social disintegration and cultural disintegration, followed by violent social instability and turmoil. China had no other choice but to comply with the tide of the world and chose a new development path. In the second half of the nineteenth Century, modernization became a mainstream in the great turmoil tide of the society and ascended to a trend with conductivity in the earlier Twentieth Century. The Communist Party of China is a political party which is best characterized with modernization spirit and its birth is a great event of creation of the world in the progress of modernization in China. Previously, almost all activities which were held to push forward the progress of modernization failed, but these great attempts had revealed all essential problems in realization of the modernization, owing to which the CPC was able to have an in-depth grasp of development rules of modernization on the basis of exploration by its predecessors and pushed forward the progress of modernization in China.

Birth of the new China brought with it a fundamental favorable turn to the destiny of China. From then on, China acquired independence, freedom, democracy and unification in their real sense, resolved the pre-condition for modernization and realized the fundamental transfer of modernization development means from passive attachment to active independence. After having undergone turmoil for quite a long period of time, China, for the first time, realized highly political unification and social stability. Establishment of the central government with

modern orientation and high efficiency and power laid the basic political foundation for realization of modernization. Simultaneously, China walked towards the socialist modernization development road. The CPC made an initial demonstration and design to the content, means, time and procedures of construction of modernization in new China according to experiences of all countries in the world, especially socialist countries. The First Session of the First National People's Congress pointed out, "Formerly, our economy was backward. Thus, if we are unable to construct powerful modernized industry, modernized agriculture, modernized transportation industry and modernized national defense, there is no way for us to break away from backwardness and poverty, and our revolution will not achieve the goal." (Selected Works of Zhou Enlai, Volume 2) The First Session of the Third National People's Congress proposed, "We are going to construct China into a strong socialist country with modernized agriculture, modernized industry, modernized national defense and modernized science and technology within a short period of time," (Selected Works of Zhou Enlai, Volume 2) and carried out the two-step development strategy.

Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC, the CPC summarized experiences in modernization construction ever since the founding of People's Republic of China, and carried out medium and long term development strategy for construction of modernization that starts out from the national situation and corresponds with the actual development need of China. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping clearly pointed out, "What is the major task currently and within the quite long period afterwards? In one word, it is to construct the modernization. Whether we can realize the four modernizations determines the destiny of our country and the destiny of the nation." (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1994) On April 30, 1987, he completely put forward the strategic plan of "three-step development strategy" for construction of modernization. The Thirteenth CPC National Congress wrote the strategic plan of "the three-step development strategy" for construction of modernization into the political report. The Fifth Plenary Session of the Fourteenth Central Committee of the CPC and the Fifteenth CPC National Congress continued to enrich and improve this development strategy. The Sixteenth CPC National Congress pointed out, with the common efforts by the whole party and people of all ethnic groups of the country, we had successfully realized goals of the first step and the second step of the "three-step development strategy" for construction of modernization, and living of people generally had reached a well-off level, which was a great victory of the socialist system and was a new milestone in development of China. The first twenty years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a period of important strategic opportunities. "We have to struggle for another several decades after construction during this period to basically realize modernization by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and build China into a prosperous, democratic and culturally advanced socialist country." The Seventeenth National Congress of the CPC further pointed out, basic realization of modernization still required continuous struggle for another several decades, which was the "the heritage and development of the great career of socialist construction in China since the founding of the new China and was the heritage and development of the great career of Chinese people to struggle for national independence and realize the national prosperity." We should comprehensively propel economic construction, political construction, cultural construction and social construction according to the overall pattern of socialist career with Chinese characteristics, promote coordination of all aspects and links in construction and modernization and build a prosperous, democratic civilized and harmonious socialist modernization country.

Thus, it can be seen, from the perspective that modernization is a process of switch from the traditional agricultural society to the modern industrial society, "since the Opium War, all complicated reforms that occurred in China have been centered with the central theme of transition from tradition to modernization, which is a general historical trend that can not be changed with changes of people's will." (Luo Rongqu, 2004) Modernization is the theme of the historical development of the contemporary and modern China.

## **2. Social harmony is the internal demand of socialist modernization**

Socialist modernization is developed as an opposite means of capitalism modernization and is the mode innovation under the particular historical condition formed by the capitalism world system. According to Marx and Engels, although capitalism modernization had realized a great leap in human history, it still had some great disadvantages. One of these disadvantages was caused by modern productivity. That is, "machines in the great industry made workers descend to pure accessory of the machines.... Those classes that exploited workers directly or indirectly were kept in bondage by the tool they used as a result of division of labor." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Volume 3) Another disadvantage was caused by conflicts between the private ownership and large-scale socialized production, which was manifested in opposition between organized production of individual factories and anarchy of production of the entire society. They called these disadvantages "modern disasters": the new source of wealth became the source of poverty as a result of a certain strange and unimaginable magic. It seemed that the victory of technique was gained at the cost of damaging morality. The

more human controls the nature, the more individuals become slaves of others or slaves of their own despicable behavior. It also seems that the pure brilliance of science can only spark behind the darkness of stupidity and ignorance. All our discoveries and progresses seem to turn out to make material power become life with intelligence, while the life of human is melted to stupid material power. This kind of opposition between the modern industry and science and the modern poverty and degeneracy and the opposition between the productivity and the social relationship of the era are an obvious and inevitable fact that can not be denied.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Volume 1)

As a matter of fact, these disadvantages are various inharmonious factors existing in the capitalism modernization. In order to overcome disadvantages and disharmony in capitalism modernization, we have to develop modernization to the stage of communism (including socialism). “The communism society here we refer to is one which is not developed on the basis of itself, but on the contrary, is generated from the capitalism society.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 1995, Volume 3) On one hand, “planned utilization and further development of all enormous productivity owned by all social members and under the condition that everyone has to work, each one will equally and more abundantly obtain means of livelihood, means of enjoyment, and all materials required to develop and manifest physical strength and intelligence.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Volume 1) On the other hand, “What will replace the old society of bourgeoisie that has class antagonism will be such a community, in which free development of each one is the condition for free development of all.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Volume 1) “Association of Free Men” is a harmonious social mode proposed by Marx and Engels. Their statement indicated, harmony was the essential requirement and fundamental feature of socialist modernization.

Harmony of the society is always the struggle goal of the CPC. Ever since the founding of the new China, the CPC has made a hard exploration and accumulated positive and negative experiences in order to promote social harmony and has achieved great achievements. Mao Zedong proposed, we had to correctly deal with internal contradiction among people, transfer negative factors into positive factors to the greatest extent and build a political situation in the whole society with “democracy and concentration, discipline and freedom, unified will and individuals’ enjoyable and lively mood.” (Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume 7) After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC, the second generation of CPC leaders complied with the historical tide and will of people and switched the focus of the work of the CPC to the track of taking economic construction as the central task in order to be dedicated to construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Successively, the CPC put forward the important ideas of not surpassing the development stage of the society, “two overall situations”, and the socialism essence with the goal of common wealth, positively proposed political system reform and built a harmonious system environment for social development. The Central Committee of the CPC headed by Hu Jitao clearly pointed out, “social harmony is the essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics”, and is the important guarantee for national prosperity, national revitalization and happiness of people.

In the process of struggling for harmony of the society, the CPC had a continuously deeper knowledge in the connotation of modernization. “Decisions by the Central Committee of the CPC on Some Historical Issues since the Building of the PRC” proposed building China gradually into a great power with modernized agriculture, modernized industry, modernized national defense and modernized science and technology as well as high civilization and democracy, which was basically followed by the Twelfth National Congress of the CPC. On the basis of comprehensively expounding the primary stage of socialism theory, the Thirteenth National Congress of the CPC carried out the basic line of the CPC and put forward the struggle target of the CPC. That is, we should lead and unify people of all ethnic groups, uphold the four fundamental principles by regarding economic construction as the central task, persist in the reform and opening up, stand on our own feet, work hard and struggle to build China into a prosperous, democratic and cultural socialism modernized nation. The Fourteenth National Congress, the Fifteenth National Congress and the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC followed the same statement. The Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the CPC adjusted the struggle target of the CPC as “building a prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious socialism modernized nation”, which reflected the new knowledge of the CPC that harmony of the society is the essential demand and fundamental characteristics of socialism modernization.

“Harmony of the society” has its distinction of the broad sense and the narrow sense. It is the use of the narrow sense of “harmony of society” to parallel construction of a harmonious society with economic construction, democratic and political construction and cultural construction. Socialist economic construction, political construction and cultural construction offers material foundation, political guarantee and spiritual support for social construction, whereas, social construction provides favorable conditions for economic construction,

political construction and cultural construction. In the actual living situation in China, the social career development lags behind, which calls urgently for rapid boosting of social construction with the emphasis on improvement of the livelihood and for coordinated development of social construction and economic construction, political construction and cultural construction. Economic construction, political construction, cultural construction and social construction correspond with the struggle target of prosperity, democracy, cultural advancement and harmony. Thus, construction of a harmonious socialist society “reflects the internal demand of building a prosperous, democratic and civilized socialist modernized nation”.

### **3. Constructing a harmonious socialist society is the important strategy to promote modernization construction**

After having entered a new century and a new stage, China has also entered the critical period of reform and development, with profound reform of economic system, deep changes of social structure, in-depth regulation of interest pattern and deep changes of the thinking and ideology. This unprecedented social reform has brought enormous vigor to construction of modernization in China and has also brought about a variety of contradictions and problems, which is mainly reflected as the following. Firstly, the cost of the resource environment of economic growth is too heavy. Accompanied with rapid economic growth and the large amount of consumption of resources and energy is that the ecological environment being serious damaged, water, air and soil are serious polluted, such major pollution indices as chemical oxygen demand rank high in the world, the entire function of the ecological system is reduced, land resources are serious devastated, and the area of water loss and soil erosion as well as land desertification is expanded. Secondly, social gap with the fundamental content of gap between the rich and the poor is becoming larger, such as gap between different areas, gap between different industries, gap between urban and rural areas, and gap between distribution of income. According to the survey on 120,000 urban and rural households across the country in 2006, in urban households, the proportion of the average disposable income of the 20% households with highest income to that of the 20% households with lowest income was 5.6, calculated with the quinquesection method; in rural households, the proportion of the average disposable income of the 20% households with highest income to that of the 20% households with lowest income was 7.2, with an average proportion of income of urban households to income of rural households being 6.5. (Ru Xin & Lu Xueyi, 2008) Thirdly, differentiation of material living conditions leads to differences of different classes in such aspects as concept, emotion, value orientation and consciousness ideology, etc, further leading to a certain kind of “barrier”. Pursuit of economic interests drives people to look up towards individualism, money worship and utilitarianism. In order to pursue interests, people often act by any kind of means, and even deceive each other, as a result of which commercialization and pragmatism of interpersonal relationship is caused, development of people get one-sided, social morality slides down and social honest lacks. Fourthly, social career development lags behind, investment in social security, compulsory education, relief of poverty and public health is insufficient which are directly related with the basic livelihood of people, and the issue of guarantee of living welfare of laid-off workers caused by economic system reform can not be resolved thoroughly within a long period of time. As a result of accumulation of a large number of social issues and unsoundness of democratic system, the social public security is austere and feeling of safety among of the public reduces.

Challenges are quite austere which are brought about by disharmony between social and economic development, enlarged gap between the rich and the poor and social inequality, which adds to the risk of China in realizing the modernization. In order to further promote construction of Chinese modernization, we have to properly resolve new problems and new contradictions that appear in the progress of modernization, while construction of a harmonious socialist society is exactly the important strategy proposed by the CPC to face up with these challenges.

A harmonious socialist society in a one with democratic system and stability. Thus, we have to realize stability and good order in all tasks of the country under the strategy of governing the country by law, properly resolve all sorts of contradictions and problems and realize orderly development of economy, politics, culture and society. A harmonious socialist society is one with fairness and justice, and honest and fraternal love. Thus, we have to resolve the issue of social justice in the economic switch, create fair development opportunities for different groups in the society and enable different groups to share together the achievements on the reform and opening up. A harmonious society is one which is filled with vigor and in which human and the nature gets along harmoniously. Thus, in economy, we have to further deepen reform and expand opening up, eradicate all concepts and institutional and mechanism disadvantages that impede development and facilitate continuous increase of social material wealth; in politics, we have to further advocate socialist democracy and improve socialist legal system; in culture, we have to further enhance the scientific and cultural quality of all social

members and their ideological and moral quality, vigorously develop advanced culture, advocate and cultivate national spirit and offer ideological guarantee, spiritual motivation and intellectual support for the economic and social development. In the mean while, we ought to firmly establish and comprehensively carry out the scientific outlook on development and realize harmonious relationship between human kind and the nature.

There is no society that has no contradiction, and the human society is developed in contradictions and, likewise, construction of modernization is pushed forward in continuously resolution of contradictions. The harmonious society we aim to build is one with democratic and legal system, fairness and justice, honest and fraternal love, vigor, stability and order and harmonious relation between human kind and the nature. It is also a society in which construction of socialist material civilization, political civilization and spiritual civilization are developed together. Hence, construction of a harmonious society is the bright lighthouse that leads people to construct the magnificent target of the prosperous, democratic and culturally advanced socialist modernized nation, and is the important strategy to push forward the progress of modernization in China.

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