

TRUMP VS. CHINA

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FACING AMERICA'S
GREATEST THREAT

NEWT GINGRICH
WITH CLAIRE CHRISTENSEN



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SECTION ONE

TRUMP VS. CHINA

After decades of misunderstanding China and its ruling Communist Party, I've come to realize that China is a much more formidable competitor than our politicians, academics, and news media have realized. We had accepted a fantasy version of China. The truth is, the real modern China is a totalitarian communist dictatorship that wants to be the world's dominant superpower—and the United States is in the way.

CHAPTER ONE

AMERICA'S GREATEST CHALLENGE

This book is a report on two strong leaders, two strong countries, two strong visions—and the competition that will decide which vision succeeds and which vision fails.

As president of the United States, Donald Trump is the leader of the free world. It is his duty and responsibility to uphold our nation's values, protect our democracy, defend the rule of law, and preserve the individual rights endowed to each of us by our creator. As our commander in chief, President Trump is sworn to protect our American national identity, our way of life, and our sovereignty. The ideas of freedom and sovereignty are so important to who we are as Americans that President Trump used the word “sovereign” or “sovereignty” 21 times in his September 2017 speech to the United Nations and “free” or “freedom” 13 times.¹

But today, the interests, security, and values that our country cherishes, and the free world in which we are accustomed to living, is being challenged by General Secretary Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party.

As general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping presides over the communist totalitarian dictatorship that

has been in power since the founding of the People's Republic of China in October 1949. Using surveillance, control, deception, and cheating as methods for preserving the power of the Chinese Communist Party—examples of which are provided throughout this book—General Secretary Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party are constructing a different kind of world that threatens the survival of our free and sovereign nation.

To illustrate this competition, consider the words of these two leaders. Let's start with the differences put forth in the two leaders' visions for the future: President Donald Trump's Make America Great Again initiative and General Secretary Xi Jinping's China Dream proposal.

President Trump at his inauguration on January 20, 2017, said:

“So to all Americans, in every city near and far, small and large, from mountain to mountain, and from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again. Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams, will define our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way. Together, We Will Make America Strong Again. We Will Make America Wealthy Again. We Will Make America Proud Again. We Will Make America Safe Again. And, Yes, Together, We Will Make America Great Again. Thank you, God Bless You, And God Bless America.”²

That is a patriotic vision of national success that looks to its people for leadership. American voices, hopes, and dreams will bring our nation to a better future. It is ultimately because of the ingenuity and effort of the American people that our nation is the world power that it is today. Putting America first and Making America Great Again starts *with Americans*. That is the way our country's system was built more than two centuries

ago, it is the way the US continues to prosper today, and it is how we will continue to grow stronger in the future.

Six months later, General Secretary Xi gave a speech about realizing the China Dream in July 2017, which gave his vision for China's future:

“The whole Party must uphold socialism with Chinese characteristics and remain confident in the path, theories, system and culture of Chinese socialism, ensuring that the development of the Party and the country proceeds in the right direction. On the basis of a thorough understanding of the phases of China's development and the people's aspirations for a better life, we should adopt new ideas, strategies and measures to advance the overall plan of seeking economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress.... In our final spring towards a moderately prosperous society, we will strive for the [China] Dream of national rejuvenation through successes in Chinese socialism.”³

Xi's vision places the socialist system above the Chinese people—and calls on them to follow and depend on it to improve their lives. It represents a vastly different pattern of thought from President Trump's words.

Now, consider President Trump's remarks at a rally in Phoenix, Arizona, in August 2017:

“We can do anything, we can build anything, and we can dream anything. It's time to remember what our brave soldiers never forgot. Americans share one flag, one home, and one glorious destiny. We live according to the same law, raise our children by the same values, and we are all made by the same Almighty God.

“As long as we remember these truths, as long as we have enough strength and courage in ourselves, then

there is no challenge too great, no task too large, no dream beyond our reach. We are Americans, and the future belongs to us. The future belongs to all of you.”²⁴

Here again, the ownership of America’s future success “belongs to all of you.” By contrast, during a speech on May 22, 2019, Xi described each generation of Chinese people as being on their own Long March. The Long March refers to the Chinese communists’ more than 4,000-mile-long retreat from their Nationalist opponents during China’s civil war. The Long March is historically referred to with a sense of pride by the Chinese Communist Party, as this yearlong determined effort led to the rise of Mao Zedong as the central communist leader. Mao eventually established the People’s Republic of China that today is ruled by the Chinese Communist Party.

According to Xi, each generation engages in its own long march to slowly move the country. It is arduous, difficult, and requires great sacrifices from the Chinese people. Xi said there was “no easy path to realizing a great ideal” and that “[t]here can be no room for any desire for ease and comfort, any desire to avoid the fight, any arrogance and complacency, or any lack of drive to carry on forging ahead.” He had specific instructions for the Chinese people for succeeding in their current long march to achieve two Chinese Communist Party–determined centenary goals:

“To carry forward the spirit of the Long March and succeed in our present long march, we must remain committed to the great ideal of communism and the common ideal of Chinese socialism and engage in a tireless struggle to realize our ideals and beliefs. . . . On our new long march, we must firmly believe that the path of Chinese socialism is the only path that can lead us to socialist modernization, and the only path that can create better lives for the people. . . . As we advance on this

path, we must vigorously promote the spirit of the Long March, and draw on this spirit to inspire and encourage the whole of the Party, all our military, and every Chinese person, especially the young, to devote themselves to making the country strong; to continue the great cause our predecessors started; and to write a new, glorious chapter in our new long march to attain the Two Centenary Goals and realize the [China] Dream of national rejuvenation.”⁵

President Trump and General Secretary Xi both have a deep sense of national pride and have presented clear visions for the future direction of their countries. But the distance between their ideal worlds is vastly greater than most Americans think. Importantly, they are mutually exclusive. If one vision succeeds, the other will fail.

There is also a real chance that Xi’s vision (which is the Chinese Communist Party’s vision) will prevail. This would be a disaster for everything that we hold dear as Americans.

In America, the news media, businesses, much of academia, and many of our political leaders (down to the state, county, and city levels) have fallen for a “nice, new China” model and have ignored the fact that the country is ruled by a communist totalitarian dictatorship. The Chinese Communist Party has intelligently mounted a 40-year-long propaganda campaign (going back to Deng Xiaoping’s first visit to the United States) to create an aura of normalcy and acceptability. This is a false front for the real China. It has led to an acceptance of a wave of victories by the ruling Chinese Communist Party with limited American reactions.

For the first time in a generation, we have a president who realizes that China and its communist leadership pose a challenge. President Trump has begun to take on this communist dictatorship in a variety of ways. The Trump administration is the most methodically critical of China—and the most committed

to developing serious strategies to counter the communist dictatorship—that we have seen in at least a half-century. The contest between President Trump and General Secretary Xi may decide the future of freedom for the foreseeable future.

This book is going to introduce you to the greatest threat to a free America that we have faced in our lifetime. It is also going to suggest some urgent steps that we need to take if America is going to survive. This may sound extreme to some. However, after a lifetime of studying world conflicts—and recently more than a year focused on studying the current situation in China—I’m confident in saying that China is the greatest competitor the United States has had to deal with in its 243 yearlong history. China’s totalitarian system, extraordinary organization, and immense population make this communist nation incredibly formidable.

Before outlining the challenges that communist-run China poses for the United States, I would like to emphasize that this is *not* a competition between Americans and Chinese people at an ethnic level. When I describe ways in which China is trying to subvert or defeat our country, I *do not* mean that every Chinese person you meet is a sincere supporter of the Chinese Communist Party who is seeking to undermine our freedom and way of life. This is a competition between two different systems—not civilizations. America could collaborate with a noncommunist China with entirely different expectations and concerns. It is the ambitions of the leadership—not the characteristics of the people—that make a totalitarian communist-ruled China dangerous.

India is projected to soon have more people than China, yet the very nature of Indian democracy, and the general process of the rule of law and free speech, make India a potential ally rather than a threat. Indonesia also has a large population, but it is a regional power with a broadly democratic system. Brazil is a massive country, but its robust system of law and free speech with free elections makes it a positive neighbor and an occasional ally rather than a threat.

What makes China different is the combination of a Lenin-

ist totalitarian system with a historic belief that China should naturally be the Middle Kingdom at the center of all things. Combine this notion with a long tradition of methodical, disciplined learning and work going back to the civil service examination system—China's main method for choosing officials, which dates back to at least the seventh century and has its roots in the Han Dynasty (more than 2,000 years ago).⁶ It is this Leninist totalitarianism with Chinese characteristics that is a mortal threat to the future of freedom and the rule of law in which Americans believe.

We would be incredibly uncomfortable living in a world defined by the Chinese Communist Party's censorship, surveillance systems, and pattern of jailing anyone who disagrees with the government. Yet, we have opened up world trade to China, invested heavily in the country, and allowed many of our supply chains to become dependent upon it. So, we now find ourselves in a long-term competition with a system that is antithetical to our own. If we lose this competition, America as we have known it could be submerged by a foreign totalitarian system of dictatorial control. President Trump's concept of Making America Great Again (and now Keeping America Great) is simply incompatible with General Secretary Xi's China Dream. One or the other will ultimately define the future of the human race. Some Americans will reject this stark analysis or reply that the threat isn't this dire. This book will answer these objections and outline some stark and sobering truths.

Let's begin with the structure of power in China—and how we have profoundly misunderstood it to our detriment. Xi Jinping is general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, chairman of the Central Military Commission, and president of the People's Republic of China—in that order.

Xi's true power base is the Chinese Communist Party. He reinforces this power by controlling and politicizing the military. In China, the People's Liberation Army is loyal to the Communist Party and is an instrument of its power—not the

instrument of government power. On the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army in 2017, Xi commanded the military to "carry forward and implement the Party's absolute leadership." He said, "As comrade Mao Zedong once pointed out, our principle is to have the Party command the military, not the military command the Party."⁷

The number one job for General Secretary Xi is to secure the future for the Chinese Communist Party. Every trade negotiation, policy, and investment is made with the intent to ensure the power, and increase the strength, of the Chinese Communist Party. Within this context, today's China is a starkly different country than the one our analysts and policy experts have explained for the last half-century.

Not only do we use the wrong model to understand the Chinese communist dictatorship but we also use the wrong time horizon. The American news media has evolved into a remarkably shallow, short time horizon, gossip system. The news channels essentially play bunch ball with a compulsive, overwhelming focus on whatever trivia defines the day's "big story." These channels have become political in the narrowest sense. Some are pro-Trump, most are anti-Trump, but all are focused overwhelmingly on the partisanship headline of the day. This distorted sense of *only-right-now-matters* makes it much harder for the country at large to understand what the Chinese communist system has been doing. Chinese strategies are based on studying, thinking, and planning. The Chinese leadership is dominated by pragmatism—not theory. Its leaders think methodically, and they execute over time with intentional purpose.

Americans are profoundly weakened in our effort to analyze the communist dictatorship by our sense of immediacy. The US watches the Chinese Communist Party implement the same patterns—in area after area—while we sit passively without understanding.

For instance: China has been stealing American intellectual property for decades. One recent estimate suggests that China's

cyber hacking cost the US \$360 billion in one year (more than all American exports to China that year).⁸ Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama worked out agreements with China to stop the stealing of our technology—or signed legislation into law to protect American intellectual property. In every case, China continued stealing, and America did not impose (or even create) a meaningful plan of deterrence.

China bases its claims to the South China Sea on historical records from the Xia and Han dynasties that are thousands of years old.⁹ Based on a map from the 1930s, China has laid claim to the area within an arbitrary “nine-dash line” and has been occupying both natural and artificial islands in the South China Sea. First, they promised “to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability.” They later promised not to militarize these islands.^{10,11} Then, they built airfields and fortified ports on the islands. China dramatically increased the number of fishing trawlers in the area and formed them into a maritime militia. Now, China is further strengthening its military capabilities and has effective control of the region. Meanwhile, China is pursuing a similar incremental project with steps toward controlling key strategic points on the Moon.

When China wants to dominate a particular industry, it relies on government financing and subsidies for Chinese companies, so their products and services can be radically less expensive than their foreign competitors. This approach destroyed the American solar power industry, greatly harmed our steel and aluminum manufacturers, and decimated key parts of our technology hardware industries. The Chinese Communist Party simply drove American companies out of business when American companies couldn't match the impossibly low subsidized prices of their Chinese competitors. Past American leaders have raised objections and signed hollow agreements, but China continued doing what was best for China despite the agreements.

The same cheap financing model is beginning to be used to destroy the entrepreneurial American space launch companies. Innovation is an inadequate basis for success if the competitor is so heavily subsidized that their prices are too low to match. China is using the same financing strategy for the Chinese telecommunications giant, Huawei. There is a serious possibility that Huawei will dominate the 5G rollout on a worldwide scale and create a next-generation internet that is defined—and controlled—by China. When the prices are low enough, many countries will ignore potential security problems just to get the latest technology.

The list of China's strategic initiatives is lengthy. Our news media, academic scholars, and government analysts generally do not connect the dots and come to grips with the underlying Chinese Communist Party strategies and the momentum behind them.

I have been studying China and its communist leadership since 1958.

About 17 years ago, after I left Congress, I began to sense just how big China was becoming and that its reach was beginning to span worldwide. I tried and failed to put a system in place whereby every military attaché in the world would provide a weekly report on China's state or Communist Party activities using only open-source material—so that it could be distributed widely throughout the American system. Unfortunately, that project was never developed. We would have a far better understanding of the Chinese communist totalitarian challenge today if we had written and circulated routine reports for the last few decades.

However, some in the public and private sectors are beginning to see how dramatically the Chinese communist system is growing in power—and influencing our everyday lives. It is not too late to respond to this challenge, but it will require a major American effort and require significant changes in our thinking and actions.

The national effort to solve the challenge to American

survival posed by the rise of the totalitarian Chinese Communist Party-ruled system will take at least a decade. It is useful to compare our current reality to the other great challenges of survival that America has previously faced to understand just how big this effort will be, how much learning and change it will require, and how persistent we will have to be to succeed.

There have been four great challenges to American survival during our 243 yearlong history. In each case, we had to confront the high cost of losing and the threat of surrendering our God-given rights and freedoms. The rise of China as a totalitarian global competitor is the fifth of these challenges to American survival. Communist-controlled China poses a challenge of survival to the US because if America falls behind a totalitarian communist Chinese system, the ensuing erosion of our values, democratic system, and law-based order will be enormous and possibly decisive.

In the first four great challenges to the survival of the idea of America (individual rights coming from our Creator and implemented within the rule of law), our opponents could have won. If America had lost any of these challenges, life as we know it today would cease to exist. We would live in a different world.

The first challenge was the question of whether we could win our freedom from the British empire and become an independent country based on a new principle of individual rights endowed by our Creator. The entire project could have collapsed since Britain was the wealthiest and most powerful empire in the world. Moreover, at least one-fifth of the American colonists wanted to remain British subjects and rejected the very concept of independence. A militarily coerced America would have been a different place and the history of freedom on the planet would have been much more subdued.

The second challenge was the question of whether the US could survive and win a brutal Civil War to preserve the Union and end the system of slavery. A Union victory was not inevitable. The war went so badly that as late as August 1864, President

Abraham Lincoln thought that he could lose the election and the Peace Party would seek an armistice with the South. Imagine a world with the United States torn in two, the cause of freedom diminished, and slavery continuing for another generation or more.

The third challenge was the difficulty of recognizing the threat from the Axis powers (Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Fascist Italy) during World War II and organizing an extraordinary national mobilization to win a global war with total victory. Victory was likely once the United States joined Great Britain and the Soviet Union because the Allies had an enormous long-term advantage in resources. However, it is easy to forget how close the Japanese came to winning at Midway in June 1942. It is also easy to forget how close the Germans came to capturing Cairo and the Suez Canal in the summer of 1942. We also cannot forget how close the Soviets came to collapse under the first year of German onslaught and the enormous casualties and loss of equipment the Soviets endured. Additionally, if Normandy had failed, the Americans and British might not have had the nerve to launch a second invasion on that scale. If a decisive Allied victory did not happen, the world today would be vastly different.

The fourth challenge was the sudden shift from the Soviet Union's role as a wartime ally of the United States to a serious global threat. This led to a diplomatic, economic, psychological, technological, and military effort lasting until the collapse of the Soviet Union 45 years later. In the late 1940s, both France and Italy seemed to be on the verge of electing communist governments that would have allied with Joseph Stalin. Moreover, Greece was in a civil war that the communists had a real chance to win. In Asia, the communists were on offense in China and Vietnam. Consequently, President Harry Truman took a series of strong steps, including a number of secret actions in Greece, France, and Italy. The potential for a Soviet-dominated world was much greater in the late 1940s than we can imagine 70 years

later. There was no “inevitable” victory for freedom in the Cold War. Similarly, victory over China’s communist system is not guaranteed. We must begin to adapt and develop new ways of meeting and exceeding this challenge.

THE FIRST STEPS

We are well behind in this competition, but America is still the most powerful, wealthy, and innovative country in the world. If we take the challenge with China seriously, we will prevail and survive. However, there are a few key things the Trump administration must do now to lay a foundation for success.

First, we must educate the American public by establishing an unclassified website that regularly details China’s activities around the world. Every embassy and every federal agency should be tasked with filing open-source reports on China’s state and Communist Party activities. The website’s archive must be available, accessible, and understandable for citizens and the news media to use as an easy entry point. It should be organized by country, industry, and activity. This information provided by agencies and embassies around the world should be included in monthly and annual summary documents. This recommendation comes first because educating the American people, the news media, and the Congress about the scale and momentum of China’s efforts is the precondition to sustaining a long-term survival strategy.

Separately, our intelligence, military, and law enforcement agencies should generate secret monthly reports for the president, members of the executive branch (including political appointees and senior civil servants), and every member of the Congress. A monthly 30-minute briefing on what we are seeing around the world will rapidly lead members of the Congress and leaders of the various federal bureaucracies to construct and implement a much more assertive response.

To act on these briefings, Congress should create a Joint Committee on China’s Activities in Congress. If a new joint

committee is established, this committee would need to have recommendation authority that would allow it to look at every aspect of the legislative process. The top leaders in both the House and Senate should be *ex officio* members—so that bipartisan groups in both the House and Senate are committed to undertaking the reforms needed to succeed in surviving the China challenge. There are too many institutional reforms across the federal government—and too many regulatory changes—needed to develop a successful high tempo, high tech, all-of-society system that can outperform the Chinese dictatorship. The failure to effectively compete with Huawei for worldwide 5G implementation is a symptom of the deeper challenge that is occurring in zone after zone of activity or industry. Ultimately, the legislative branch has a big role to play in creating a more dynamic, faster-moving, and more decisively assertive America.

At the societal level, we must dramatically expand Chinese study programs for graduate degrees and continuing education. In the early years of the Cold War, the government made a major investment in getting people to study the Soviet Union. It also developed a lot of learning material to help people understand our adversary. The China challenge will be so large—and will evolve so rapidly—that we can't rely entirely on the intelligence or the diplomatic community to solve every problem that arises. Every government department will be affected by China. Every aspect of the American economy will be affected by China. There will be continuing efforts to shape our culture, communications, and news media. Combating this effort is going to require a system for helping educate many Americans at many different levels (including public education programs aimed at the general public).

In this vein, we must reverse the decline in American students in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs by dramatically expanding the scholarships and fellowships to help everyone who enters these fields. Since the

basic knowledge in these fields has to start in middle and high school, we should consider providing extra pay for STEM teachers. We should also invest in many more seventh–twelfth grade scholarships to go to specialty STEM high schools—and more programs of recognizing achievements in STEM. We were innovative and aggressive after the launch of Sputnik in October 1957. We have now become timid, bureaucratic, and lethargic. We have talked about the crisis in education since *A Nation at Risk* was published under President Reagan in 1983. Yet, we have consistently failed to develop adequate breakthrough programs to deepen and broaden our STEM capabilities. After Sputnik frightened us, with the danger of falling behind the Soviets in science and engineering, we passed the National Defense Education Act in 1958. I know how important this program was. I got my PhD with a National Defense fellowship. Instead of complaining about how few American students now occupy our STEM classes, we need aggressive programs of incentives to attract young, capable Americans into these fields.

Finally, we must take into account the growing Chinese-Russian alliance when constructing an American strategy. When General Secretary Xi says he has met with Russian President Vladimir Putin nearly 30 times in the last six years, and that “President Putin is my best friend and colleague,” we have to take him seriously. American planners must take into account the potential that there will not be a conflict in isolation with either Russia or China. Instead, we must build capabilities that could cope with a joint effort by the two countries.

These are just a few of the critical actions we must take now to cope with the Chinese Communist Party’s strategies—and win. I hope this book will help launch a national debate about the Communist China challenge and the necessary American response. If America is to survive and continue to lead in the future, we must come to grips with how great the challenge is and what must be done for freedom to endure and prevail.