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Recommended Citation
DOI: 10.58837/CHULA.ARV.25.1.6
Available at: https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv/vol25/iss1/7

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Human security and Chinese political economy*

Vorasakdi Mahatdhanobol

Abstract

This article examines how China looks at the issue of human security and the change of their internal and external policies toward human security. China's repressive regime is now having a hard time maintaining itself while trying to enter into the world market. Opening up the country involves applying international versions of human rights for their citizens, adjusting their production system to suit international standards, cooperating with foreign countries, and so on. Changes that came with economic liberalization are shifting China into a new phase of development and governance with problems of ethnic conflict, corruption, and abuse of authority by government officers. Yet slowing down the growth rate would also cause problems for those who benefit from this policy. China has to find a balance between the demands of its new international role and the realities of internal strains.

Statement of the problem

The People's Republic of China today is the product of the Chinese revolution by the Communist Party of China in 1949. Through more than 60 years of the Party's rule, China has experienced many significant political economic events, both good and bad. China is now a very prosperous country with large international reserves and its authoritarian regime cannot be modified by the Western powers.

*This work was supported by the Higher Education Research Promotion and National Research University Project of Thailand, Office of the Higher Education Commission (HS1069A-55).

However, China still has its own problems and limitations which can be highlighted by using the framework of human security.

The concept of human security as used in the 1994 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) is divided into seven main areas: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. All countries experience issues falling under these seven areas. This study raises human security issues encountered by China focusing on specific issues which are significant for Chinese political economy.

**Origins**

The successful revolution against the Republic of China by the Communist Party of China in 1949 and the establishment of a new republic under the name “People’s Republic of China” led to a totally different state system from that of the past. This newly created state inherited systems of governance from its predecessor and modified them to fit the modern world. It also drew on Marxism-Leninism as a support for the establishment of the new state. This was an important turning point in Chinese history.

Since the construction of this new state, China has maintained its political stability, though not without difficulties such as the consequences of the “Great Leap Forward policy” in 1958, the Cultural Revolution during 1966–76, and the Tian’anmen Square Massacre in 1989. These troubles can be regarded as partly coming from China’s lack of experience with the new government system. Drawing on the resulting experience, China subsequently paused and sought a new direction to move forward.

China today has been shaped by the era of reform, which began in 1978 and drew on lessons learned from the age before. China is en route to become the most prosperous nation in the world, as a result of many policies pursued in the era of reform. Apart from economic policies, China also adjusted its political system to achieve a high degree of stability, and this stability served as a launching pad for development because China no longer had to worry about political unrest.

This stability is based on an authoritarian one-party system, led by
the Communist Party of China. Therefore, anything that undermines the Party’s authority also impacts the country’s stability. When stability is affected, human security is also affected.

**Challenges of concept and approach**

In general, a good Communist has no room for unscientific thoughts such as occultism or superstition. During the Cultural Revolution period, not only were occult beliefs criticized and expunged, but religions were also regarded as superstitious. This led to the purging of religious places and monks. However, after the termination of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of the era of reform, Chinese classical traditions were brought back to life. At the same time, Western culture, which was once rejected, came to play a role in Chinese society. From then onward, the society has experienced gradual change. Today, it is totally different from the time when it was fully Communist.

These changes posed a fundamental challenge to the concept and approach adopted in the pre-reform era. The Chinese government no longer outlawed religion, but had to manage the consequences of allowing religions to flourish. Unscientific beliefs, which were rooted in Chinese society and culture, such as Qianshi, Wuxing, Fengshui, astrology, and dream forecasting, reappeared. According to a 2007 survey by the National Political Science Research Council of China in seventeen provinces, 28.3 percent of state officers strongly or partly believed in such ideas. There are many examples of high-ranking Chinese officials taking decisions and making policies on the basis of Fengshui beliefs, though they are illogical and against the public interest, resulting in bad governance and ineffective use of budget. These officials also set a very bad example for Chinese citizens, in contradiction to the central government’s emphasis on scientific development.

Since the era of reform, such phenomena have become widespread. The Communist Party still promotes scientific socialism though it is clearly out of step with popular social currents. Many problems are challenging scientific socialism and the government needs to come up with solutions.
Corruption

Corruption is a problem that has existed throughout the history of China. During the Communist period (1949–78), this problem was not apparent. However, in the era of reform, this problem has not only become more apparent, but also increasingly acute. One factor that leads to corruption is the privilege system that benefits party members, especially administrators or leaders, at the expense of ordinary people. The privilege system allows party members to exert full control over development projects. Though corruption is general, the most serious incidence occurs in local government.

The infamous problem of corruption through the privilege system can be dated back to the 1990s when China actively promoted reform and wooed foreigners to invest in many designated economic areas, especially on the eastern coast, sparking an economic boom in that area, which improved the living standards of the local inhabitants. Naturally, those living in other areas began to demand for similar changes.

Scandals emerged when government agencies in the inland provinces tried to follow suit by designating economic zones just like the eastern coast, and attempting to attract both Chinese and foreign investors. As they lacked support from the central budget, they raised development funds through local taxes and fees. When projects failed, local inhabitants found out that the money they had paid (reluctantly) had disappeared into private coffers or senseless projects. This problem spread all over the rural areas, and finally led to many protests against local governments. These protests were often in vain.

In some localities, taxes were raised arbitrarily. In one area, cereal taxes were raised by 50 catties (1 catty equals approximately one-half kilograms). In another, households breeding swine had to pay an additional fee of RMB 45. In another, any household building a new house had to pay tax of around RMB 150–500, while other general house owners paid RMB 50 per house. In another, any household growing peanuts had to pay RMB 10 per mou (approximately 666.5 sq. m.) of land, while any household purchasing a new tractor had to pay RMB 50. These are just a few random examples. In some cases, these demands led to conflicts between villagers and local officials, resulting in violence. In one case, the village head and his grownup...
sons attacked and killed four protest leaders, but were immune from punishment because of protection from the party and state leaders in district governing units, prosecutors, judges and the media. The sons disappeared without a trace. The court passed a sentence of life imprisonment on one of the sons, but declared the others innocent. The neighbors and families of the victims sent a representative (with the highest education which was high school) to request the documents made by the prosecutor and the court. These were obtained with great difficulty, and stated clearly that the four victims were the ones who started the incident, leading to a violent quarrel, and thus the murder.

The case took place even though the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China had issued many orders forbidding officials from burdening peasants with additional taxes or fees, and threatening severe punishments. But these orders had no effect on local leaders.

In almost every case the local state or party leaders at each level possess strong powers to decide on administrative issues. They form a tightly knit network. Local people's access to justice is beset with obstacles. The power of local administrators comes largely from the position they hold in the party, either as member or officer, rather than their official role.

In 1996, while such incidents were smoldering all over China, an economist, Wen Tiejun, proposed a concept of rural development with three strands: improving the lives of rural residents, developing the rural areas, and increasing the productivity of agro-industries in the rural areas.

In 2000, Li Cangping, a party secretary in the village of Qipan in Hubei province, sent a letter to Zhu Rongji and the prime minister to inform them that rural residents were truly suffering, that rural areas were truly impoverished, and that agro-industries were truly falling apart. This statement was consistent with the proposal for the development of the three areas. The concept was later implemented by academics and civil servants, and later became the origin of the term “san nong”, which means the development of the aforesaid three areas.

In 2003, the san nong concept was included in the Communist Party report, and has served as the concept for China's rural development to this day. However, it has still not able to get rid of all corruption.

From a survey of Liao Wang (Observation), a journal in the Xinhua
News media group, there were still many local organizations whose expenditure practices border on graft. They spend on banquets, official cars, travel, and construction of majestic offices. New laws and regulations failed to prevent the increase of corruption.

Many proposals have been made for combating corruption including reforming budget administration, limiting authority in budget disbursements of party members or officers (i.e., state officers or civil servants), and issuing credit cards to state officers (the card itself would record actual disbursement, preventing officers from using fraudulent receipts). None of these unofficial proposals were approved by the government.

In the urban areas corruption was as widespread as in the countryside and even greater in financial terms because of the higher cost of living. Xinmin Wanbao (New People Evening Paper) reported that a state officer in Shanghai spent over RMB 15,000 of corrupt money per day on fancy meals, karaoke, spa massage, golf and apartments for his mistresses.¹¹

State officers were also involved with public companies that expropriated plots of land from the people in urban and rural areas in the name of development but in fact used the land to build condominiums, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses.¹² Where there was resistance by the original owners, the state officers in collaboration with the public companies would go as far as hiring hoodlums to attack the owners which led to riots in many areas and later became cases in the court. Even though the court could punish some officers and public companies, many such cases were not put on trial, and others faced many obstacles or delays.¹³

These corruption cases were related to the country’s complex political and government structures which give state officers many opportunities to pursue corrupt practices with impunity. These officers exploit the authority given them by the Communist Party of China.

Under the san nong policy approved by the National People’s Representative Council in 2004, the government undertook to reduce agricultural taxes on average by at least five percent annually, and to cancel them completely within five years. This measure boosted farmers’ incomes,¹⁴ but prevented local leaders from collecting taxes or fees from rural residents. However, it is still uncertain whether this measure will be effective. In the 1990s, government made several
attempts to stop local leaders imposing additional taxes and fees on peasants and rural inhabitants. The long term solution will be to reform the administrative and political system to become more effective in dealing with corruption.

Globalization and “local protectionism”

While the world was entering the age of globalization in the early 1990s, China was undergoing major economic reforms, which called for greater openness to trade and investment from overseas than in previous decades. The main objective of these reforms was not only to attract foreign capital, but also to acquire technologies from foreign investors. This attempt was quite successful. At present technologies in China are far more advanced than in several other developing countries that pursued free trade policies earlier than China.

In 2001 after more than ten years of negotiation, China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). China has partly adapted to global standards, resulting in major changes to Chinese industry, such as controls on toxic contamination, corporate responsibility for the environment, and regulations on human rights violation. But the political system has been less flexible. The administrative structure has many levels of governing units that create their own rules. The same individuals occupy posts in the local parties, the local governments, the local representative councils, and the local justice systems. This resulted in the phenomenon known as “local protectionism” (difang baohu zhuyi).

This “local protectionism” affected both domestic and international issues. One domestic example concerned pollution in the Huai River (Huai He) that flows from Henan through Anhui to Jiangsu. The pollution was caused by waste from paper and chemical factories. Although these factories created jobs for local people, the benefit was outweighed by the costs of combating pollution which amounted to approximately RMB 600 million over ten years. More importantly, even though the government closed down the offending factories, they were re-opened shortly thereafter. Although the central government theoretically wields absolute power, in reality local governments can act independently.

Agricultural goods exported from northern Thailand to southern
Yunnan were inspected for contamination at the point of entry and held for a period of time according to regulations. When this process was cleared, they were transported to the next inner province. As it turned out, when the goods reached another town along the route, they were re-inspected even though they had a permit issued by the first checkpoint. Each town had its own regulations. By the time the goods reached their destination, they were rotten and unsaleable.

The conflict between adaptation to globalization and conservation of the political system emerged because local government wielded powers to force local banks to support businesses facing severe financial problems, collect arbitrary fees or taxes, set up random checkpoints to inspect the quality of imported goods, take over the ownership of local state property, and freely reallocate land. Local government administrators tended to give special preference to local businesses under their control in order to boost revenue during their term of office. They gave priority to businesses with high and fast returns, such as metal smelting plants, chemical fertilizer factories, tobacco factories, paper factories, and automobile factories, all of which are highly polluting. Local governments in many areas violated the central government’s laws in order to earn fast profits. Moreover, local governments also imposed constraints on foreign investment while simultaneously increasing the incentives to keep local capital and businesses from moving away. These actions tended to turn the local market into a closed market, which obstructed the formation of a unified national market system, fairness in competition, division of labor, and development of industrial structures at the national level.

The main cause of these problems is that local governments wield many powers that are held by central government in other countries. The central government evaluates local governments by setting targets for the growth of local Gross Domestic Product (GDP). To reach their targets, local governments promote local businesses in ways which conflict with national and international interests. This tendency was dubbed “local protectionism.”

The result was rapid economic growth but with many costs including environmental damage and conflict with trading partners. The central government was reluctant to close down factories that did not meet international standards (or even the central government’s criteria), or to rein in the power of local governments, as these
measures would lead to the instant collapse of businesses supported by local governments, and a sharp reduction in the growth rate. But leaving this system in place in the longer term promises to undermine the Chinese economy and political stability. The only option left for China is to embark on political reforms.

**Problems of nationality and democracy**

In the Chinese language, *minzu* has broad and narrow definitions. The broad definition encompasses all the people in the country, regardless of ethnic or tribal background, whereas the narrow definition refers to each ethnic group separately.

The term “democracy” (*minzhu*) as adopted by the Communist Party of China means democratic centralism, which is different from the definition of democracy used in liberal democratic countries. Nevertheless, China maintains that its political system is another form of democracy.

Since 1978, issues concerning nationality and democracy have changed. During the Cultural Revolution, some ethnic groups faced problems, and religious bodies became inactive. In the era of reform, these problems diminished. Issues over democracy were not readily apparent as there was widespread understanding of democratic centralism.

Following reform and the Open Door Policy, China has been exposed to new currents from the outside world which have influenced the thinking of Chinese people as well as other ethnic groups.

In 1989, the issue of democracy led to the Tian’anmen Square Massacre. Many smaller conflicts have arisen over issues of liberty, sovereignty, human rights, and ethnicity. Ethnic conflicts are confined to certain groups and depend on the historical and cultural background of each ethnic group. At present, the problem of ethnic conflicts is most apparent. This problem is not at all a new issue, but has been slowly brewing since the 1990s.

Ethnic problems began to appear when the Chinese government embarked on projects to improve the quality of life for ethnic groups through economic development. As a result, Chinese people of Han ethnicity moved to areas largely populated by ethnic groups. They ran businesses, which included “entertainment” as broadly defined. These
“entertainment” businesses began to trigger conflicts in various areas where the inhabitants felt that they were undermining local religion, culture and way of life.

Another related problem concerned the language of communication. The Chinese did not learn local languages but expected local inhabitants to learn Chinese instead. Those that acquired a good command of Chinese enjoyed many advantages. People were indirectly forced to study Chinese, often at the expense of local languages. Naturally, this contributed to dissatisfaction in many areas where ethnic groups concluded that China was trying to suppress their identity. In areas such as Tibet and Uyghur, these problems culminated in a violent reaction against the Chinese.

After 1949, Tibet became part of China, but many Tibetans still do not accept this fact. From time to time they demonstrate against Chinese rule—often facing military crackdown in return. This problem is sometimes connected with the quest for the right to perform Buddhist ceremonies. The problem concerning the Uyghur in Xinjiang province has less to do with sovereignty than in Tibet, partly because the area was absorbed earlier, prior to the age of the modern state system. However, some Uyghur people still make historical claims for the sovereignty of their nation, and some have joined movements to fight for sovereignty. The new economic policies adopted since the 1990s have added to these problems. Though ethnic conflicts have been around for a number of years, those that broke out in 2008 and 2009 were particularly violent. In 2008, many Tibetans organized a series of demonstrations to coincide with the hosting of the Olympic Games in Beijing, probably expecting to attract international support for the Tibetan cause, and also to urge the international community to boycott the Olympics. Demonstrations erupted in many districts populated by Tibetans who raised a number of issues, ranging from sovereignty and religious freedom to disapproval of Chinese investment in their areas. Many Chinese-owned shops and businesses were attacked and some Chinese people who lived in those areas were injured. Moreover, demonstrations took place simultaneously in several other countries, and were joined by foreigners. Local governments ultimately resorted to police violence to crackdown on the Tibetan demonstrations in China, an act which pleased quite a number of Chinese people. The Tibetan demonstrators seemed to lack unity because of their diverse
and scattered demands. Tibetan attacks on Chinese people were quite worrisome, and so was the Chinese people’s support for using police violence to disperse the demonstrators. The Tibetan issue clearly indicated the presence of ethnic hatred.

Another conflict between the Chinese and the Xinjiang Uyghur took place in 2009. Unlike that in Tibet, the case of the Xinjiang Uyghur was clearly based on ethnic issues. The incident that sparked the 2009 conflict seemed to be a story on the internet made up by a certain Chinese living in Guangdong. It stated that a Uyghur workman from Xinjiang had raped two women in Guangdong. The fabricated story spread like wildfire, enraging many local Chinese workers who organized an attack on Uyghur workmen, causing two deaths.

This news spread rapidly to Ürümqi, the capital of Xinjiang, where people protested against the local government for failing to protect the best interests of the Uyghur people. They also attacked Chinese people in Ürümqi. The local Chinese retaliated on the very next day by gathering hundreds of men to attack the Uyghur. Before the police came to stop the violence, hundreds of Chinese and Uyghur people had been killed. In December 2009, a court sentenced seventeen suspects to death, including one Chinese. The remaining suspects were imprisoned.

Although the incidents in Xinjiang and Tibet were different in detail, deeply rooted ethnic hatred was a common factor. Although China can suppress these nationality problems, a permanent solution will need much longer time and patience. The point is whether or not the government can recognize the root causes of the problem. The central government would first have to concede that economic development in areas inhabited by non-Chinese ethnicities is a problem in itself. In other words, China may have to alter its development approach. If so, the government must also come up with good explanations for the Chinese people whose interests might be jeopardized by the change. The issue over democracy arose in the same period, though the Tian’anmen crisis in 1989 resulted from different conditions and forces. This problem can also be traced back to the economic growth since the 1990s. At present, this growth has made many Chinese richer, leading to demands for a freer life, though such demands cannot be made openly, because of the political risk involved.

There are still movements for democracy in China. These movements are not directly opposed to the Communist Party. Instead,
people are demanding greater political participation as a means for solving various problems in the political system such as the abuse of authority and corruption. These movements may be broadly divided into two groups: the right and the left.

The right clearly wants the central government to move towards a democratic political system, while the left calls for the return of a certain form of socialism. These two groups criticize each another vehemently in a war of position. It is said that the right, consisting mainly of the liberal intelligentsia, experienced party members, and economists, is much bigger than the left which includes the younger generation and middle-aged intelligentsia, working in state institutions such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and as instructors in leading universities such as Tsinghua University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Renmin University of China. How much the right-left divide impacts Chinese leaders' vision is still a difficult question to answer.

We only know that in recent years Chinese leaders have regularly talked about democracy, but their view on democracy has not changed much. This conclusion is based on the 2005 White Book of the PRC State Council, which states that the Chinese democratic polity will give priority to the maintenance of unity under the leadership of the Communist Party, the people's ownership of the country, the rule of law, certain features and advantages of socialism that are beneficial to social security, economic development and improvement in the quality of life in accordance with the protection of the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and dignity—consistent with the natural law of development, which is gradual and orderly. In sum, the Communist Party of China still wields superior power in this democratic polity.

The Communist Party still opposes western-style democracy and the separation of powers (i.e., executive, legislative, and judicial powers). The movements for democracy in China are limited by the fact that they have to depend on the Communist Party's willingness to allow them any political participation.

Nationality problems, which are directly connected to ethnic conflicts, are more visible than problems of democracy. This is because democracy problems cannot be expressed openly and therefore appear to be absent. Both nationality and democracy problems are byproducts of the country's economic development. However, Chinese economic
development still has to rely on the country’s political system. Therefore, how the Communist Party responds to these problems (if at all) is of great significance.

**Southeast Asian neighbors**

Since ASEAN is increasingly developing relations with China, the regional community will inevitably be impacted in varying degrees by the direction of development in China.

China has maintained relations with its Southeast Asian neighbors for hundreds of years. Not all of them had maintained regular contacts with Communist China. But after 1978, China’s relations with these neighbors have been unprecedented. Since the 1990s, the Chinese search for economic cooperation with this region has tightened the relationship between the two sides. However, this does not mean that the relationship is friction-free.

From the 1990s to the present (2011), China has had two levels of economic cooperation with Southeast Asia. The first level concerns the Mekong sub-region—due to the fact that China shares borders with the countries in this area. The next level involves ASEAN, and the focus is on developing completely liberalized trade by the end of the 2010s. These two levels are interdependent and inseparable, and hence have to be grasped simultaneously.

China has implemented three Mekong dam projects (out of some ten projects planned). They are the Manwan, Dachaoshan, and Jinghong (Chiang Hung) dams. With the cooperation of Myanmar and Laos, China has modified channels in the Mekong River to enable ships under 100 tons to travel all year round (previously they could travel only during the six-month period of the rainy season). This project was conducted by dredging channels and exploding reefs. It was only in the Khon Phi Long area of Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, that this project could not be completed because it would alter the borderline between Thailand and Laos along the Mekong River. Since the successful modification of water channels in the Myanmar-Laos area, the use of the Mekong River as a trading route has greatly expanded.

However, there were also devastating side effects, such as the flooding of the Mekong River in 2008 and the great drought in Yunnan
in 2010, when the water in the Mekong River fell to an unprecedented level. The first case was thought to have resulted from China's release of water from the dams, and the second from the storing of water. These two problems along with several others also had impacts on the environment, such as fish reproduction, and growth of plant life—all of which have had serious repercussions on the food security of the people on both sides of the river. Although fingers were pointed at China for these problems, it reacted as it typically does—that is, by maintaining an air of indifference.

In 2010, China began to be more open, coming out to declare that its own famine problem was an important result of the unusual drought in the Mekong area. In March, China even sent a number of high-ranking delegates to join the Mekong River Commission Summit, which was hosted by Thailand in Hua Hin district of Prachuab Khirikhan province. This is a sign of improvement. As a great power, its silence and indifference could only be interpreted as irresponsibility or sheer arrogance. Although China has adopted a more open position, we need more time to ascertain whether its relationship with the lower Mekong states is worth calling cooperation.

As for the second level, China is well prepared for trade liberalization with ASEAN member states. This preparation can be seen through the construction of basic infrastructure in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, such as large deep-water ports, various industrial zones, and railway projects from China through Vietnam and Laos into Thailand. Moreover, there are many preparations in Yunnan, which has no access to the sea. Routes are being developed via the Mekong River (as mentioned above), by road through Laos and Myanmar to Thailand, and by railway planned from Myanmar to Thailand. The Chinese political system gives considerable autonomy to local government with the result that the leaders and high-ranking officers of different governing units compete with one another to complete such development projects.

Although Sino-ASEAN cooperation is progressing, it can be bumpy. Some of the hurdles include the South China Sea dispute over territorial claims made by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. There have been sporadic disputes between China and Vietnam in recent years, and sometimes they broke out in open hostility, including the use of armed violence. There is no
clear evidence whether this conflict will halt Sino-ASEAN cooperation. Laos recently “ignored” an agreement signed with China on the construction of high speed railways from Laos to Thailand. It is said that Vietnam had persuaded Laos to put a brake on the project as a response to the intensifying Sino-Vietnamese conflict in the South China Sea. This situation can be understood from Laos’ cozier relationship with Vietnam than with China.\textsuperscript{31} If left unresolved, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict could disrupt cooperation between China and ASEAN.

In sum, China’s relations with its Southeast Asian neighbors have progressed significantly but still have many obstacles to overcome. If these obstacles are rooted in each country’s domestic factors alone, which vary from country to country, then they are understandable and not very distressing. However, obstacles arising from clashing security interests are far more difficult to resolve as evident in the South China Sea issue. We should also mention that the cooperation in the Mekong sub-region, which seems to have very few obstacles, is actually affected by the tension between China and Vietnam. For instance, Vietnam has often voiced its skepticism or concern about China’s development projects in the Mekong area. The Sino-Vietnamese dispute is bound to have widespread security ramifications in the region.

Conclusion

All the problems mentioned in this article concern human security issues. There are numerous other problems such as crime, drugs, prostitution, AIDS, and Chinese migrant workers that have resulted from development policies rather than the political system. Yet the political system itself can cause problems, as well as being an important mechanism for solving them.

The Chinese political system as it stands today is a product of the country’s long history along with foreign additions such as Communism. The Communist Party of China wielded absolute power in a way that was not significantly different from that of Chinese dynasties in the past. Former leaders like Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping had power on par with emperors, even though they never declared themselves to be emperors, and even opposed the entire emperor system. Today, the Communist Party is trying hard to prevent such use of
power. The absolute power that exists in China today is unlike that under the dynasts in the past.

There seems to be a certain political cycle in China's long history. Every reigning dynasty ultimately collapses, and the political road arrives at a fork: either a new dynasty will come to power immediately, or chaos will reign for some tens or hundreds of years until a new dynasty emerges. The Communist Party has ruled China for less than a hundred years. Whether or not it is able to rule China for several hundreds of years largely will depend on its ability to provide human security to an acceptable degree. If not, it will fall just like the Chinese dynasties did in the past, and a new political group will come to power. Perhaps there will be a period of chaos and a long struggle for power. It is too early to conclude now. But whichever way it is played out, the people will be greatly impacted. From the cases cited in this article, it is justifiable to say that human security is in quite a dreadful condition in China. If it is not improved, then numerous related problems may culminate in a national security crisis. Therefore, the Communist Party of China has no choice but to take human security seriously.

Notes

1 This article is a part of the research project: 'International Cooperation and Human Security' by Chula Unisearch, Chulalongkorn University (HS1069A) supported by the Higher Education Research Promotion and National Research University Project of Thailand, Office of the Higher Education Commission. This article is a modification of the final chapter from the research Chinese Political System already published in: Vorasakdi Mahatdhanobol, Ruling over China: Party, Leaders, and State Power (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2011).


3 The Great Leap Forward policy increased production targets beyond those set in the five-year Economic Development Plan, but practically focused on the production of steel. Because of its focus on the mobilization of people rather than technology, together with some natural disasters, this policy failed. See Vorasakdi Mahatdhanobol, Chinese political economy (Bangkok: Chinese Studies Centre, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2006), pp. 63–76.

4 The Cultural Revolution arose because of disunity among Chinese leaders; one group wanted to strictly follow a Socialist approach to development, while another group called for more flexibility. The result was that the former took the lead and suppressed the latter, leading to great chaos throughout the land. See Mahatdha-

5 The Tian’anmen Square Massacre occurred because of demonstrations by students and people calling for the government to solve problems of corruption, freedom of speech, declaration of assets by the leaders, and so on. The government perceived these protests as an attempted revolution, and used violence to suppress them. See Mahatdhanobol, *Chinese political economy*, pp. 214–234.


10 Mahatdhanobol, *Chinese political economy*, pp. 300–301.


17 Democratic centralism means a centralized and collective work based on democracy, which is a form of democracy that happens under the co-leadership of the working party. “Centralization” refers to how members and organizations work together to accomplish the objectives and ideas set by the Party. See Vorasakdi Mahatdhanobol, *Governing China: Party, Elites, State Power* (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing House, 2011), pp. 31–32.


March 2008).


25 This information is received from a scholar in a leading university, whose name cannot be mentioned here.


28 See Bunsak Saengrawi, trans, China: Socialist or Capitalist, (Bangkok: Sukkhapabjai Group, 2006), pp. 147–173 and 175–188 respectively.

29 Bangkok Business (20 March 2010)

30 Khien Thirawit, Chinese Foreign Policy, pp. 386–404.

31 Professor Chen Lüfan, President of the Association of Southeast Asian Studies, interviewed on 24 May 2011.