

# *From Initiating the Target of Moderate Prosperity to Completing the Building of a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects*

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**T**he past 40 years has seen the remarkable history of the building of not only socialism with Chinese characteristics but also a moderately prosperous society by the Chinese people led by the Communist Party of China. By 2020, China will have finished building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and realized the second strategic objective of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It took some western developed countries one hundred or even several hundred years to complete this cause. A review and analysis of this historical cause today may help us better understand the historical logic and the theoretical logic in finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

## **1. Proposal of the target of modernization in Chinese style—the target of moderate prosperity**

The rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is to completely change the passive state since the Opium War, turn China into a strong modernized socialist country, so that the Chinese nation may once again emerge as one of the advanced nations of the world. This has been the greatest hope of the Chinese people for over a hundred years, and many outstanding individuals have made a variety of attempts and struggles for it. However, before the Communist Party of China, no one has really put forward the correct and comprehensive way for the great rejuvenation of the nation, not to mention practical development strategies and development objectives.

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It was the Communist Party of China that put forward the strategy and objective of modernization development for China and started China's modernization process in a real sense. Mao Zedong founded the theory of new democracy, successfully guided the triumph of China's new democratic revolution, and correctly answered a series of important issues concerning the modernization construction after the victory of the democratic revolution in China, an agricultural country with backward economies and cultures. In particular, he pointed out that the fundamental way of modernization for China is industrialization and that our agricultural country should be turned into an industrial one. Thus, China's modernization has been turned from a fantasy into reality.

The founding of the new China provided the fundamental conditions for nationwide large-scale modernization construction. In September 1954, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai put forward the goal of "Four Modernizations" at the 1st National People's Congress: through seven five-year plans, that is, by the end of the 20th century, our country would be built into a great modernized socialist country. The proposition of the "Four Modernizations" has far-reaching significance and influence on China's modernization and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Objectively speaking, however, limited to the understanding of modernization, this objective, especially the schedule, lacked sufficient objective basis. Coupled with various reasons later on, the Party's anxiety for success in economic construction developed into "Leftist" errors in guiding ideology, which resulted in a serious setback in the implementation of this objective. By the end of the 1970s, although China's economy remained at a high rate of growth and the economic system was built up, the foundation had been weak and disproportionate. In particular, the people's livelihoods had not been improved accordingly,

and even food and clothing problems had not been solved. Deng Xiaoping was soberly aware that it was impossible to realize modernization of international standards by the end of the 20th century. So he proposed in 1979 the "Chinese-style Modernization" or the modernization in "Chinese standard": the target of moderate prosperity (per capita GDP of USD 1,000). The target of moderate prosperity is a realistic objective which is down to earth. China has largely achieved this objective at the end of the 20th century, realized a stage goal in the modernization in Chinese standard, fulfilled the promise of the Communist Party of China, and turned a century dream of the Chinese people into reality.

At the beginning, the target of moderate prosperity was just an objective for improvements in per capita GDP and people's living standards. In March 1985, upon field visit to Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanghai and other places where the target of economic moderate prosperity had been achieved Deng Xiaoping analyzed and summarized the local situations and put forward a new development objective, the building of a moderately prosperous society. The objective to build a moderately prosperous society is one characterized by coordinated economic and social development and comprehensive development. First, a moderately prosperous society is one in which people generally have ample food and clothing and live and work in peace and contentment. Second, a moderately prosperous society is one in which material progress and the construction of spiritual civilization develop at the same time. "Not only should we develop the economy, we should also create a good social order and a good social atmosphere" (Deng, 1993). Third, a moderately prosperous society is one leading to common prosperity, fairness and harmony.

By combining people's traditional ideals with realistic demands and embodying the basic principles and advantages of socialism, the objective

to build a moderately prosperous society has outlined a social vision that is close to the people. As a target of economic and social development by leaps and bounds, this objective has highlighted the Chinese nation's ambition to catch up with the advanced and has greatly mobilized people's enthusiasm and creativity to build a better country with their own hands and wisdom. It is also a realistic objective which is down to earth. Based on China's national conditions, it has identified the historical starting point and realistic basis for China's modernization.

The objective to build a moderately prosperous society is a strategic goal of dynamic development. It has broadened mind of the Communist Party of China to lead the people to keep pace with the times and determine China's long-term strategy and objectives in modernization construction based on the reality of China. It was in the process of brewing this objective that Deng Xiaoping put forward the "Three-Step" strategic plan which, for the first time, provided China's modernization drive with a clear and practical development strategy, goals and a timetable. Upon entering the 21st century, while basing itself on reality, focusing on the future and keeping pace with the times, our Party has constantly enriched, expanded and deepened the objective to build a moderately prosperous society and the "Three-Step" strategic plan.

## 2. Entering a new development stage in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects

In the historical periods of revolution, construction and reform, the Communist Party of China has always timely set clear and inspirational objectives in accordance with the wishes of the people and the development of the cause and unified and led the people to strive for it. By the end of the 20th century, China had largely achieved the target

of moderate prosperity and realized the second stage strategic goal of the "Three-Step" strategic plan. However, the Communist Party of China did not rush to deploy the third step, that is, basically realizing the goal of modernization by the middle of the 21st century as a direct development objective. Instead, it made a new strategic arrangement. In November 2002, the 16th CPC National Congress made it clear that "As human society entered the 21st century, we started a new phase of development in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and speeding up socialist modernization", and clearly put forward a new objective that "we need to concentrate on building a moderately prosperous society of a higher standard in an all-round way to the benefit of over one billion people in the first two decades of the 21st century" (CCCPC Party Literature Research Center, 2005).

The establishment of the objective to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects opened up a new development stage in China's socialist modernization construction.

The objective to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects was determined according to the objective process of China's modernization construction and the actual situations of the periodic changes in economic development. By the end of the 20th century, after more than 20 years of reform and development, China's economic and social outlook had undergone profound historical changes. The national economy maintained rapid growth, the national economic strength was significantly enhanced, the people's overall average living standard reached the moderately prosperous level, the problems of food and clothing that had long been faced by the people were fundamentally resolved, and the dream of generations to lead a moderately prosperous life finally became a reality. However, from the perspective of the stage of social development, China is still in the primary stage of

socialism, and the changes in economic and social outlook are still periodic ones in the entire initial stage of socialism. In particular, the moderately prosperous level of people's overall average living standard is still at a low level which is not all-inclusive and is very uneven. On such a basis, it still takes stages and time to reach or get close to the level of moderately developed countries. The objective to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects put forward by the 16th CPC National Congress is aimed at consolidating and improving the level attained, and turning the low level, not all-inclusive and very uneven moderately prosperous state into a higher level, relative all-inclusive and relatively balanced one.

The building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects is an indispensable connecting stage of development in the process of socialist modernization in China. China must go through this stage, and from a higher starting point, strive to achieve the third step of strategic objective by the middle of the 21st century.

The objective to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects is a constantly evolving objective with specific and rich connotations and requirements. The 16th CPC National Congress put forward the basic objective to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects by developing social economy, politics and culture with Chinese characteristics, and made clear the programmatic requirements: the development of economy is the primary task of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; we should continue to uphold the banner of reform and opening up we should realize social progress in all respects based on economic development; and the starting point and the ultimate goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects is to improve the living standard and quality of the people of the whole country.

With the progress of the times, profound changes have taken place. In October 2007, the 17th CPC National Congress put forward new requests on building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in response to new restrictions in economic development, new characteristics in social transformation and new changes in the international environment. It enriched, expanded and deepened objectives set by the 16th CPC National Congress and made new strategic plans on economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development that constitute the fundamental objective system. This objective system made highlights and put forward the following requests: the first is to guarantee the coordination of the development while ensuring a fast and sound growth of the economy in the face of the imbalanced economic situation of the country; the second is to address people's new aspiration of participating in politics, through the expansion of the socialist democracy and the guarantee of people's rights and social justice; the third is to strengthen the country's soft power through the promotion of cultural construction and the guarantee of people's ethical standards across China; the fourth is to address the incoordination between economic development and social development, which highlights the improvement of living standards through social construction; and the fifth is to protect the environment and promote ecological construction, and basically form the industrial structure, growth mode and consumption mode of energy and resources conservation and environment protection.

Practices have proven the correctness of the struggle objective of building a moderately prosperous society set by the 16th CPC National Congress and the fundamental objective system set by the 17th CPC National Congress. With the encouragement and under the leadership of such an objective system, our country has embarked on

a sustainable path towards the target of moderate prosperity. China's economic and social development have gone into depth and our national strength and international competitiveness have reached a higher level, which lays a solid foundation for the realization of the "Third-Step" strategic plan by the mid-21st century.

### 3. Ensuring to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects on time

The second decade of the 21st century is a decisive stage in finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. The 18th CPC National Congress put forward the struggle objective to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020 and made solemn commitment to the Party, the people and the history. It further elaborated on the objective system of finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in accordance with the economic and social development, and put forward a series of new requests on economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development. The 18th CPC National Congress also made it a major focus to address the imbalance, incoordination and unsustainability occurred in economic and social development; it highlighted the requests on deepening reform and opening up, promoted efforts to address development issues, perfect the socialist market economy and improve all kinds of institutions with reform approaches, so as to add dynamics and provide system guarantee to finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; it incorporated the ecological construction into the struggle objective, and put forward the reform objective of accelerating the ecological construction for the first time.

After the 18th CPC National Congress, President Xi Jinping described profoundly and vividly the

Chinese dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, a dream that is aspired by Chinese people generation after generation, and reiterated the "Two Centenary Goals" set by the Communist Party of China. He also pointed out that finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects is a critical step to realize the Chinese dream in the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (CCCPC Party Literature Research Center, 2016). To realize such an objective, the Central Party Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core insisted on building socialism with Chinese characteristics based on the reality of China and promoted the "five in one" layout combining economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development. It set out the "Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy" with finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects being the foremost strategy and deepening reform, advancing the law-based governance of China and strengthening Party self-discipline being the three pillar strategies. The "five in one" layout and the "Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategies" are integrated and coordinated.

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee made an overall strategic plan to deepen the reform and brought a new wave of reform. Reforms in each sector speeded up, the scale and the strength of which were unprecedented. The reforms were carried out in an all-round way and breakthroughs were made in key areas with a proper speed and good momentum. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee made the first decision of strengthening the rule of law in the history of the Communist Party of China, and made clear that law-based governance of the country in every respect is the fundamental strategy of people's ruling the country under the leadership of the Party. The Fourth Plenary Session also proposed a series of practical approaches to implement this strategy and to provide a favorable legal and social



environment for economic and social development. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the Central Party Committee has put forward new and higher request to the Party itself, and unswervingly pushed forward the objective of strict self-governance in every respect, and rule-based governance, attacking corruption at all levels. On such a basis, the working styles of the Party and the government took on a new look.

These efforts provided important conditions and guarantees for finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. By the end of 2015, our country had successfully completed all tasks and objectives set by the 12th Five-Year Plan and made great achievements in economic and social development. China's economic strength, scientific strength, national defense strength, national influence and people's living standards have reached a higher level. This progress has laid a solid foundation for finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

The five years from 2016 to 2020 is the decisive stage in finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "The course of struggle in the first two decades of the 21st century reaches the historical moment of making the final dash to the finish line" (CCCPC Party Literature Research Center, 2016). In October 2015, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee made a comprehensive strategic plan, issued a mobilization order to dash towards the goal of finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and made the Outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016—2020) on National Economy and Social Development.

The 13th Five-Year Plan reviews our economic and social development in an all-round way, and proposes new objectives and requirements for the finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in response to the development

"drawbacks". The objectives include maintaining the high speed of economic growth, achieving remarkable results of innovation, enhancing development coordination, improving people's living standard, enhancing people's quality and social civilization, improving the ecological environment on the whole and making all institutions more stable and mature. All these objectives are centered on a key word in the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, which is "comprehensiveness": a moderately prosperous society should cover all sectors, one that is defined by the "five in one" overall promotion of economic, political, social, cultural and ecological development; it should cover all population, one that benefits all people; it should cover all areas, in which urban areas and rural areas develop together, including building a moderately prosperous society in rural and underdeveloped areas. These objectives reflect the new aspiration of Chinese people. Nowadays, to realize people's aspiration of common wealth, we should not only reduce the disparity in growth speed between urban and rural areas and the disparity in people's income, but also narrow the gap in infrastructure and basic public services of different areas. To realize people's increasing material and social needs is no longer sufficient. Rather, we should create and provide social conditions and environment suitable for all-round development of oneself.

The 13th Five-Year Plan not only sets clear comprehensive objectives for finishing building a moderately prosperous society, but also puts forward comprehensive strategic plans. In the face of complex domestic and international situations confronting the decisive stage in finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and in the face of new opportunities and challenges posed by economic and social development, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee insisted on idea of people-oriented development,

and put forward the ideas of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. These new development ideas set clear the strategy, direction and focus of our country's economic and social development, and become a driving force and guarantee for sustained development and finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. The idea of innovative development highlighted the importance of the development driving force and answered the question of how to maintain and strengthen the development and what is the impetus for finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; the idea of coordinated development highlighted the most important objectives and answered the question of how to maintain the sustainable and healthy development of society and economy and what are the approaches of finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; the idea of green development revealed the necessary prerequisite of permanent development and people's pursuit of decent life from the view of human-nature relationship, which sets a goal for promoting development and finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; the idea of

open development highlighted the importance and necessity of our country's engagement in world's economy under new historical conditions, and pointed out a necessary approach to promote development and finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects; the idea of shared development highlighted the essence of the socialism with Chinese characteristics, and pointed out fundamental principles for promoting development and finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

A moderately prosperous society is an ideal society and has been pursued by Chinese people for generations. From the proposal of building a moderately prosperous society to finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the Communist Party of China has encouraged Chinese people to make continuous efforts to make the long-endavored dream come true. The Chinese nation will fully embrace modernization and the ancient Chinese civilization will generate new vigor and vitality through the process of modernization.

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