

CPPR Webinar Series
**Chinese Communist Party: 20th National Congress and
its Implications**
Event Report



CPPR
Centre for
Public Policy Research

W E B I N A R

**Chinese Communist Party
20th National Congress and its Implications**

Date: 6th October, 2022 | Time: 6 pm to 7 pm

Platform: Zoom

SPEAKER



Mr. Muraleedharan Nair
Distinguished Fellow, CPPR

MODERATOR



Anirudh Prem
Research Intern

Date and Time: 6th of October, 2022, 6pm-7pm IST time

Platform: Zoom

Speaker: Muraleedharan Nair

Moderator: Anirudh Prem

Proceedings Report

- **About the Event:** On Thursday the 6th of October 2022 at 6pm, CPPR held the webinar about the “Chinese Communist Party 20th National Congress and its implications” on Zoom. The session covered the leadership of Xi Jinping, the structure and the decision-making process within the Chinese Communist Party. Insights on China’s economy and the CCP’s policy strategies were shared as well.
- **The Key Speaker or Speakers:** The key speaker for this session was Mr Muraleedharan Nair, Distinguished Senior Fellow with Defence Research and Studies at CPPR. After completing studies at the University of Kerala, Muraleedharan Nair completed his Post-graduate in Marketing and Advertising from Bhavan’s Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management, in Mumbai. He occupied several positions in the Government, both in India and abroad. Besides publishing research papers in various books and journals, Mr Nair writes commentaries in newspapers and magazines regularly. Additionally, he speaks Urdu and Chinese. He participates in conferences, seminars and panel discussions on strategic affairs at different universities, think tanks, TV channels, All India Radio, etc.

Summary of Discussions

Introduction: the Chinese Communist Party and Xi Jinping

1. For the occasion of the 20th National Congress beginning on 16th October, around two thousand delegates are expected to attend. **The delegates are selected based on their merits and not on their support for the leader.**
2. The Congress will discuss plans for the next year and the next leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Mr. Nair remarked how the selection of the next Chinese leader is of international relevance. Meanwhile, the public opinion in China and around the world expects Xi Jinping to become president again.
3. Mr. Nair mentioned that Xi Jinping’s family was connected to the government already since his father was a minister of Mao’s state council. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the famine were also referred to outline part of Mao’s leadership period.
4. As Xi Jinping became the president in 2013, he tried to control all of China through the party and **he got a nickname: “the chairman of the country”**. He is also referred to as the “core leader” like Mao was called. **For this congress, Xi Jinping could be looking at the precise title of “the chairman of the party”**.
5. There’s a Chinese saying on age relaxation, “8 up and 7 down”. Indeed, Mr. Muraleedharan explained that the current premiere and the CPPC (CCP advisory board) chair are up to retirement and new candidates will be nominated by March 2023, but sir found it hard to make clear predictions on the possible winners.

The Chinese Economy

6. While the Chinese growth rate significantly decreased, the country's economy is going through a transition. The aim is to emphasise domestic consumption, innovation, innovation based high tech products and increase the sustainability of the system. Mr. Muraleedharan described the Chinese transition as: **"they want to become the new Germany"**.
7. China faces an increasing urban poverty. While the standard of living has improved and is one of the highest in Asia, around 60 million people live with a low income and cannot make it to pay their monthly rents. At the same time, millions of flats and shopping complexes are built in the country and these are the best investments in China. Muraleedharan sir revealed that presently people are buying a second or even a third house.
8. The Chinese economy relies on a significant contribution of real estate to the country's GDP (around 15-20%). However, these big companies are taking more and more loans to build flats and shopping complexes, and they started to take from people as well. As the companies were unable to pay back, people initiated demonstrations. Muraleedharan sir highlighted how the government immediately intervened and asked the central bank of China to take action and resolve the issue.
9. **The government has the power to control everything in China because it is one party led and there is no one to oppose it, specified Mr. Muraleedharan.** He also adds upon the government's strict interventions and he mentions the example of their approach to covid-19. Xi Jinping introduced a zero-tolerance policy against covid: China constantly registers a percentage of people who are kept under quarantine because of severe regulations. Xi Jinping is not willing to completely remove the measurements, but these have been gradually loosened.
10. Directing the conversation back to the economic situation of China, Muraleedharan sir elaborated on the private sector. For instance, tuition companies became billionaires in a couple of years and there are people in China who refused to have a second child just because of the high tuition fees. The Private sector, as a whole, contributes to 6% of the Chinese economy and 70% of jobs are provided by this sector. Innovation happens for 70% in the private sector, where also 70% of the investments in China converge. The Private sector is growing rapidly in the country.
11. These big money making companies have to contribute to the country's economy and Mr. Muraleedharan wonders **whether the party will lay down any new specific policies for the private sector.** As the group grew more powerful, the CCP allowed private sector representatives party membership so that the CCP had more control over it.

The legitimacy of CCP and Xi Jinping

12. "In China, they do not criticise the leader" are the words that Mr. Muraleedharan used to frame how the leader is perceived by Chinese citizens. **People are happy with the CCP because they show care for their people. The party**

constantly monitors the Chinese, and an issue emerges: they already have the solution. People appreciate that, especially youngsters.

13. In China, the traditional ideology of a country with an army, a government and a judicial system cannot apply. **Mr. Nair stresses that "In China, it is a party with an army, with a government and with a judicial system"**. The party's leadership of the army emerges among all.
14. Even though the CCP's leadership looks stiff, it is pragmatic. They are keen to bend the rules to meet their people's demands. The CCP would never let a famine or a job crisis take over. **The party is founded on two pillars: they care for the people and they do not wish people to go to streets and protest.**
15. The ideal Xi Jinping has for the Chinese is to make them live the American Dream. The Chinese feel that their civilization was a victim of a long time of humiliation. They wish their country to be the centre of the world and they want their culture to be the one to globalise other societies. **They have a goal set, the goal to become a prosperous democratic socialist country by 2029.**
16. Mr. Nair explains that the Chinese are set to reclaim all the land they lost in the past centuries. He draws a connection between their national agenda and the recent movements around Chinese borders and waters.
These events concern the foreign relations of the country. With the USA, China is looking for the next opportunity to line out new negotiations. At the G20 in Bali China-US, bilateral meetings are planned.

Concluding remarks and Q&A session

17. China is internationally questioned for the violation of Human Rights because of the confinement of Uyghur Chinese to concentration camps. Mr. Nair answered the audience by affirming how **Han Chinese believe to possess the greatest culture** and Chinese policies are allocating more Han Chinese in regions where Uyghur or Mongolian communities prevail, to rule over them and perpetuate Han Chinese sovereignty.
18. When asked about Chinese border policies and negotiations, he made it very clear that **China has a specific plan for its borders and they will go to any extent to resolve the border issues to their advantage**, putting apart any previously signed bilateral agreements. No matter which propositions are put forward, the Chinese will agree only under a give and take policy. He stressed the unpredictability of Chinese strategies, as it is hard to decode their signals. Indeed, they might wish for peaceful borders now but frictions are possible at any time.
19. Mr. Muraleedharan shared one of the things that surprises him the most: **"Chinese are very sensitive to allegations against them"**. Allegations China receives often question CCP's leadership and China's democracy itself. The speaker pointed out that removing Xi Jinping from the CMC chairmanship is a hard move, and it cannot happen all of the sudden. If an event of that calibre happens, he will be removed from all his duties. For his autocratic style, he does not differ from any

other autocratic leader in any other country, who promotes his people to key positions and there is no doubt about such procedure.

Key Takeaways

1. There is a good chance for Xi Jinping to be awarded the position of chairman of the party, given his thirst for big titles. However, it is too complex to make predictions on how the senior leader will decide together. In reality, the decisions for the party are taken even before the Congress starts, at this venue the options are just discussed.
2. The core message Mr. Nair tried to convey is that the CCP looks for **continuity**. He said, "I don't see any major change of the Chinese policy in any area coming, and continuity is the right word domestically and internationally". He preached how Xi Jinping is only an executive figure, who has an authoritative style, but his actions and decisions belong to the party. The CCP is committed to continuity with the supreme aim to maintain stability in the country, and there might not be any considerable departure from the current policies after the Congress.

The congress symbolises the CCP's commitment to China's national interest, the party reunites together and cooperates to maintain its own existence and power. They aim to keep the status quo, which additionally proves that relevant policy changes are not expected after the 20th CCP Congress.