

How the 20th Communist Party Congress has set up China and the Region for a Future Planned by Xi Jinping

Rowan Callick OBE FAIIA

Wednesday 9 November 2022: 5.30pm for 6pm-7pm AEDT. Dyason House, 124 Jolimont Road, East Melbourne, 3002

The 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party has just finished in Beijing, setting the path for China – and, the party intends, for Australia’s region and the wider world – for the next decade and beyond. Through the congress, general secretary Xi Jinping has swept the board in his control of the country’s top leaders – all male – and of its ideology.



Xi chose to title his five-yearly work report to his party, pithily: “*Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects.*”

The congress formalised the appointment of a new team to lead China under Xi, whom it granted a further five years at the helm. The manner in which Xi loyalists were promoted regardless of age, while those associated formerly with other party factions were discarded, raises questions about the extent to which Xi is purely surrounding himself with yes-men.

And the failure to promote to the Politburo Standing Committee – the seven men at the peak of the party – anyone below 60 and thus potentially young enough to succeed Xi, underlines the growing concern about the lack of any succession plan. This means that Xi is almost certain to be granted a further five years in office at the next, 21st, congress, so he will remain unchallengeable until at least 2032.

China expert Rowan Callick OBE, an AIIA Fellow, briefed the AIIA’s recent annual conference in Canberra on immediate takeouts from the congress, and will develop and extend that analysis at this event in Melbourne. You are invited to join Rowan to take a very close look at Xi’s recent work report.



Rowan Callick OBE FAIIA is an Industry Fellow at Griffith University’s Asia Institute. He was Beijing-based China Correspondent of *The Australian* for two terms, following 20 years with *The Australian Financial Review* including as China Correspondent based in Hong Kong. He was also Asia-Pacific Editor for both newspapers. He has won a Graham Perkin Award for Australian Journalist of the Year and two Walkley Awards. He has written three books published in both English and Chinese - *Comrades & Capitalists: Hong Kong Since the Handover* (UNSW Press, 1998); *Channar: A landmark venture in iron ore* (Hardie Grant, 2012); and *Party Time: Who Runs China and How* (Black Inc., 2013), published internationally by Palgrave Macmillan as *The Party Forever: Inside China’s Modern Communist Elite*. Rowan is a member of the Advisory Boards of the National Foundation for Australia China Relations, La Trobe University’s Asia Institute and China Studies Department, and the University of Technology

Sydney’s Australia China Relations Institute.

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