

President Trump took a tough stance against Beijing last year, demanding fair trade and an end to forced technology transfer and technology theft.

In 2018, several rounds of the tariff-based U.S.-Sino trade war pushed China's economy and stock market into the cold winter.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its controlled media have been blaming Trump and his administration for trying to destroy China's economy. Those "patriotic" Chinese who the CCP keeps brainwashing also followed suit.

However, there are still many Chinese people who like President Trump. The Taiwan-based Storm Media even stated, "Trump must not have realized that he has more supporters in China than in America." {1}

So why do so many Chinese like Trump?

Many Chinese people are interested in and follow international affairs. They also discuss or comment on the politics of other countries on the Internet or in social media.

Quite a few of them are aware of the major events in the U.S., from choosing a Supreme Court Justice to the government shutdown. They are familiar with President Trump.

Many of them like President Trump because of his personality.

On the Chinese Zhihu website where people post questions and others provide answers, a question was posted, "Is Trump the best or the worst President in U.S. history?"

There were many comments. One comment summarized the postings, "I looked at the answers, most of them can be summarized as follows: Pro Trump: He keeps his promises and actually delivers on them. Against Trump: He is involved with Russia gate, prostitutes, and many bad things."

Another answer said, "No doubt that Trump is the most difficult U.S. President to deal with. He has two obvious strengths: One, excellent management experience. Two, no vulnerability and free of temptation. Kennedy was lured by beauty, Clinton went for money, Obama cared for fame and power, but there is nothing that can trap Trump. In U.S. history, only two Presidents, George Washington and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had those two traits. We all know how

formidable the U.S. was in their times.” {2}

Many people like him because of his political positions

One Chinese blog said, “The reason that the (U.S.) elite group slanders Trump but the public accepts him is that he challenges the established order of the elite group’s officialdom. That is why the elites call him as a ‘fool’ and ‘less mature than a fifth grader.’ But that is also exactly why the American people like him.” {3}

An answer to another Zhihu question, “Why do so many Chinese netizens like Trump?” was, “If you look at the details of Trump’s answers, they are practical and actionable. Hillary said to increase welfare. Where would she get the money? Increase the tax rate to get it from the middle class. But why should the middle class, who put their diligent efforts into study and work, pay for those who do not work but simply have kids (and therefore are entitled to welfare)? Hillary also talked about universal health care. Where would the money come from? Again, increase taxes. Trump said to lower taxes so that business will grow more and medical insurance premiums will decrease. That is more feasible.” {4}

In his blog, one Chinese said, “In one sentence, why do we like Trump? Because we are disgusted with the ‘White Leftists (White Liberals).” He then quoted Jason Pargin’s article “How Half of America Lost Its F**king Mind,” {5} which stated that the elite group focused on promoting “political correctness” while leaving the grassroots people live in a miserable state. {6}

The same author also wrote new lyrics for the Chinese song “East Is Red” to congratulate Trump on winning the presidential election. That song is extremely famous in China – the CCP created it to praise Mao Zedong as the savior and played it every day in the 1970s. His lyrics said:

“Damn God, Trump Win, America changed its environment!
Black Obama and the white leftists were perplexed; the white slaves (referring to the white people suppressed under ‘political correctness’) are liberated and sing songs.

Hoping for dawn, thinking of loved ones, (people) open the door to usher in the savior!
Trump comes and cancels taxes; the grassroots whites have a high spirit.” {7}

Many Chinese Dislike the CCP

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There are also many Chinese who praise Trump and the U.S. because they do not like the CCP.

After Trump started the trade war with Beijing, Epoch Times argued that the CCP has been exploiting Chinese people and the trade war will result in the Chinese people living a better life. “Trump is using tariffs to force the CCP to open its market. Only when the good-quality-and-low-price American goods come to China can the Chinese people truly enjoy the benefit of becoming a WTO member. Otherwise, they are just poor laborers who work to benefit foreign countries.” {8}

An article that spread on the Internet in China suggested that the trade war was good for the Chinese people. It used the cancer treatment medicine as an example. Beijing imposed a high tariff on imported medicine to treat cancer and purposely delayed the approval of such foreign medicine, preventing it from entering China’s market so as to protect its own pharmaceutical companies.

For example, a 250 mg pill of Iressa, a cancer treatment medicine, costs US\$10.30 in the U.S. but 500 yuan (US\$75) in China. Chinese people, therefore, suffer either excessively high prices or the inaccessibility of the medicine. The author believes that the trade war can fix the problem by forcing the Chinese government to bring Western medicine to China and forcing Chinese companies to work on true innovation and improvement. {9}

After the U.S. announced it would impose tariffs on US\$200 billion of imported goods from China, a Chinese netizen posted an article with the title, “At the Sino-U.S. trade war, the Chinese netizens are rebelling against their ruler; Trump is like King Wu of the Zhou kingdom who started the righteous and legitimate crusade against King Zhou of the Shang kingdom.” (The allusion used here refers to the famous Chinese historical event in which King Zhou was extremely corrupt and vicious. Therefore, King Wu led a joint force to end King Zhou’s ruthless rule. The public overwhelmingly supported King Wu in his crusade.) {10}

Many Chinese posted comments and gave a thumb-up on the U.S. Embassy’s website to support the U.S.’ raising tariffs. Some of these comments were:

- Trump did what he said. Great!
- Trump brother, good job! I have confidence in you. Teach the CCP a lesson.
- Thank you, U.S.! Kill the hammer and sickle (the communist symbol).
- You should impose tariffs on the remaining US\$267 billion all together.
- Hope Trump respects the Chinese people’s wishes: carry the trade war to the end. {11}

Intellectuals Have Also Started Speaking out against the CCP

In the past, the CCP, through political campaigns and brutal torture and killings such as the Tiananmen Square Massacre, has muzzled the entire class of intellectuals in China to make them the “tamed tools of the party.” But last year, some of the scholars broke their silence.

Xiang Songzuo, a Chinese academic and an economist, stated that, according to government institutions, China’s GDP growth in 2018 was only 1.67 percent or even, by some calculations, negative. This directly disagreed with the official number which was between 6.5 and 7.0 percent. {12} {13} Xiang also criticized Beijing’s efforts to reduce private ownership and expand state owned companies, calling it the main reason for China’s economy to slide in 2018. {14}

Zheng Yefu, a famous Chinese social scholar, recently wrote that, since its establishment, the CCP has caused too many disasters. In the past 70 years it has completely lost its ability to correct itself. Only by peacefully fading out from the historical stage can it meet the fundamental interests of the Chinese people. {15}

An article, “One Hundred Chinese Intellectuals Posted Their Comments on China’s Reform and Opening up,” was posted on the Internet. The authorities quickly removed it, but people still passed it among themselves. Some of comments were:

- Cai Shenkun, a Beijing independent commentator: “Reform is not just to make sure that everyone has food, but also to see that everyone dares to speak out and has no fear about saying what they say! Reform is also to let the whole public share in economic prosperity, not only a small number of people who have wealth.”
- Chu Chengfang, a Beijing scholar: “Modern civilized countries are founded on the respect for human rights. Ancient China also believed that a country is to serve its people. However, the current China is far from that. At this time of change, we should try to make that happen!”
- Hong Zhenkuai, an independent Beijing scholar: “Only returning power to the people is true reform.” Chen Baocheng, a media person in Shandong Province: “Without freedom of speech and thought, reform and opening up are meaningless.”
- Zhang Shuang, a Beijing Normal University professor: “Real reform means that the political system needs to be reformed; real opening up means ideology and culture need to open up.”
- Zhang Qianfan, a Beijing University professor: “The root cause of all social problems in China, especially the recent regression in human rights and the rule of law, is that there are no real elections. No elections, no true reform.”
- Xu Zhangrun, a Qinghua University professor: “The big change (political system reform) in China is unstoppable!” {16}

CCP Officials Are Against Trump and the “Color Revolution”

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Despite many Chinese people who support the U.S. in the trade war, the CCP is against the U.S. and resists structural changes, either to its state-run economy or its communist ideology.

When the trade war started, the state-controlled media overwhelmingly blamed the U.S. and claimed that China had the confidence to win. A BBC article gave three reasons for this: First, Beijing felt that it had nowhere to retreat; if it retreated it would lose its authority over the Chinese people and other countries might also join the U.S. Second, it analyzed how Japan lost its economic competition to the U.S. in the 1980s and how North Korea stands up to the U.S. now, and concluded that “the willingness and determination to fight the trade war is very important.” Third, Beijing may think that it has the qualifications and the strength to fight such a war. {17}

As a result, Chinese media openly blamed the U.S. It called Trump’s approach “the perverse actions” of “bullyism,” “protectionism,” and “unilateralism.” “The trade bullyism is like a barbaric, out-of-control rhinoceros. It rudely tramples on the multilateral trading system and harms the interests of enterprises and people of all countries. It has long lost its morality and popularity.” {18}

However, after the Trump administration took action against ZTE, Beijing realized that it was much weaker than it thought. It ordered the media: “Do not use over-stated words against U.S. President Trump” and do not mention the trade war. {19}

Then as the U.S. showed no sign of talking about a truce, Beijing changed its position again. State media, including People’s Daily, China Daily, and Huanqiu (Global Times), criticized Trump again. ZeroHedge reported that “China launched a personal attack on the ‘arrogant, deceitful’ Trump” and claimed that, “We are prepared to fight to the end.” {20}

A Huanqiu editorial commentary stated, “What the Trump administration did was just the foolish things that hurt others and did not benefit itself either. Every day, the White House boasts to the American voters that ‘victory is not far away.’ There will be a day when they can’t keep it going anymore.” Qiushi, the CCP’s theoretical site, republished the article. {21}

After the U.S. raised tariffs on US\$200 billion of goods in September, China’s officials were furious. Wang Shouwen, Deputy Minister of Commerce, stated at the State Council news conference on September 25, 2018, “Now the U.S. has taken such a large scale trade restriction measure. It places a knife at our neck. How can we negotiate with it in this situation?” {22}

A Xinhua article stated, “(We have) only one sentence to say: If you want to talk, the door is open; but if you want to fight, we will fight you to the end.” {23}

China Talk is an “authoritative” high-level interview program that has participated in several major national propaganda events. {24} It interviewed Chen Wenling, the Chief Economist of a

think tank called the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. Chen accused the U.S. of eight types of bad conduct: Unilateralism, egoism, protectionism, populism, revisionism, isolationism, bullyism, and imperialism. {25}

In the next few months, Beijing quieted its anti-Trump voice again and eventually, at his meeting with Trump in Argentina, Xi Jinping promised to buy US \$1.2 trillion worth of goods. However, the CCP keeps stressing that it will never change its political system.

Xi Jinping, in his speech in December 2018, marking the 40th anniversary of the opening up of the Chinese economy, indicated that China will not make any change in its political structure. “No one is in a position to dictate to the Chinese people what should or should not be done. We must resolutely reform what should and can be changed, we must resolutely not reform what shouldn’t and can’t be changed.” {26}

Vice President Wang Qishan made a similar point at the Davos Economic Forum in January 2019. He referred the world economy as a pie. “The last thing we should do is to stop making the pie and just engage in a futile debate on how to divide it. Shifting blame for one’s own problems onto others will not resolve the problems.” He also called for respecting each country’s own sovereignty, not creating technology hegemony, and not interfering in other country’s internal affairs. {27}

The CCP is obviously worried that, as the trade war has led to an economic slowdown, it might also lead to more social uprisings and even cause the communist party’s downfall. It summoned hundreds of senior party officials to its Party School in Beijing on January 21, 2019, for a special study session on national risk control. Xi gave a speech and “repeatedly urged the officials to ‘strengthen their ability in preventing major risks’ so as to ‘ensure social stability.’ According to Xinhua’s statement, Xi claimed that China now faces major risks in seven areas — politics, ideology, economy, science and technology, society, the external environment, and party building.” {28}

Zhao Kezhi, Minister of Public Security (head of the police), at the National Conference of the Public Security Bureau Chiefs on January 17, 2019, called for the whole police system to combine their intelligence together and pull their powers together, to focus on preventing and resisting “color revolution” and resolutely win the battle for political security. {29}

“China’s senior leaders always worry about stability, but even by that standard, the Beijing gathering was noteworthy,” Bloomberg reported. “It suggests a sense of insecurity that offers a sharp contrast with the image of confidence and dynamism that China more typically projects to the international community.” {30}

Conclusion

As we can see from the many comments posted above, it is the Chinese people, but not the CCP, who welcome President Trump and support the U.S. in taking a strong position to force the CCP to remove its trade barriers and reform both its political and its economic systems.

Many Chinese are not afraid to take a stand for political change to happen in China. “Thirty years ago, on June 4, 1989, Beijing suppressed a gathering of several million people in Tiananmen Square and left terror in the hearts of that whole generation. Now a new generation has emerged in China. It is not so afraid of the CCP.” {31}

Since Gordon Chang published *The Coming Collapse of China* in 2001, there has been an increase in the number of predictions that the CCP is likely to collapse. A retired Taiwanese diplomat, Rex Wang, published a book *China will collapse in 2031*. In August 2018 in *The National Interest*, Peter Mattis of the Jamestown Foundation wrote, “China could be on the brink of collapse.” {32} Wei Jingsheng commented in March 2018, “Xi Jinping’s (dictatorship) has caused severe infighting in the CCP. The CCP will die faster because of Xi.” {33}

Liberty Times published an article stating that, “China runs into big changes (disasters) in every year whose last digit is 9.” In 1949, the CCP took control of mainland China through civil war. In 1959, the Tibetans sought freedom but the CCP crushed them and the Dalai Lama left China. In 1969, China had a war with the former Soviet Union on its northern border, and also, the President of China, Liu Shaoqi, died after Mao Zedong purged him and tortured him. In 1979, China had a war with Vietnam. The Tiananmen Square Massacre took place in 1989. In 1999, the CCP launched the persecution of Falun Gong. In 2009, a severe clash broke out between the Uyghurs and the authorities in Xinjiang, causing an estimated 1,500 deaths. The article also listed ten major challenges that China is currently facing. {34} A recent BBC Chinese article listed nine. {35}.

Another article in Chinese commented, “Many Chinese are concerned about 2019. On the one hand, many (people in China) provided unprecedented (positive) responses to predictions that the CCP will collapse in 2019. On the other hand, the CCP officials have shown an unprecedented high level of fear of losing power.” {36}

The fact that Chinese intellectuals are appealing for political reform, that people are talking about the CCP’s collapse, and that the CCP itself is extremely worried, may tell us that something is about to happen.

Endnotes:

{1} *The Storm Media*, “*Yu Jie Column: Why Chinese Welcome Trump’s Tariff Decision on US\$200 Billion Goods?*” October 7, 2018.

<https://www.storm.mg/article/524002>.

{2} *Zhihu*, “*Is Trump The Best or The Worst President in U.S. History?*”

<https://www.zhihu.com/question/273656075>.

{3} *Sina blog*, “*This Is Why the Elites and the Public Have Opposite Views of Trump.*”

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_9b12a6df0102yjgz.html.

{4} *Zhihu*, “*Why Are There So Many Chinese Netizens Who Like Trump?*”

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<http://blog.sciencenet.cn/blog-3262601-1015570.html>.
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<http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/18/3/27/n10254528.htm>.
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- {10} 6Park.com, "Chinese Netizens Are Against Their Leaders," September 19, 2018.
<https://club.6parker.com/bolun/index.php?app=forum&act=threadview&tid=15345756>.
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<https://www.storm.mg/article/524002>.
- {12} China Change, "A Great Shift Unseen Over the Last Forty Years, Speech by Xiang Songzuo," December 28, 2018.