China has been under Communist rule for over sixty years. Erratic political actions such as the Great Leap Forward, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution and the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Massacre notwithstanding, China has emerged as a major world power, and its people are enjoying the highest standard of living in more than a century. The country’s emergence from obscurity into planned modernization has many surprised.

The introduction of the market economy has released the Chinese people’s previously-repressed desire for material wealth, and given them the means to attain it. China is more powerful than ever before. Would China have achieved the same economic progress under a non-Communist regime, say that of the Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party)? Taiwan's economic take-off in the 1970s under Jiang Jieshi’s (Chiang Kaishek) rule and the prosperity that followed may tempt some staunch anti-Communists to say yes. Jiang found a way to combine one-party rule and rapid development, while stressing the importance of traditional values.

The term ‘Modernization’ itself seems ambiguous. A great variety of opinion exist and the reason for this may be that many scholars see the process of modernization or development as a whole and, treat economic, political, social and other factors as interrelated characteristics. In fact, one of the distinguishing aspects of the concept of modernization is that it appeals to all the areas of human knowledge. One scholar puts it as follows: ‘Modernization is the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies.’ In 1992 a conference was held at Fudan University in Shanghai on the various historical perspectives of China’s modernization. The choice of the word ‘Modernization’ proved difficult for both sides of the symposium membership, indicating that one should be careful in using and interpreting the word ‘Modernization’ when applied to underdeveloped countries.

Thus, the definition of modernization, as far as China in the 1920s and 1930s is concerned, is not universally agreed upon. It is argued that, ‘economic modernization represents the creation of new wealth on a sustained basis over time’. Particularly since the late nineteenth century, China’s economic modernization on the mainland has never fulfilled its capability – even though not rushing modernization in one sense has resulted in saving resources.

One of the remarkable features of Chinese thinking is that concepts are often dualized. A recent example would be the slogan of the late Premier Deng Xiaoping in the 1990s: ‘One country, Two systems.’ The important question is how the Chinese people interpret this slogan and how they think it will help the
future development of China. There is therefore a tangible legacy from Chiang to Deng.

The reason of looking back to Jiang’s considerations of China’s modernization in may ways during the 1930s and compare them with China’s success today is because they are very much similar. It seems that the core difference in ideology – military dictatorship versus communism – does not have much influence or dictates the way China may chose to modernize. In the 1930s Jiang Jieshi and his nucleus of elite Guomindang members had developed a concept of how to execute their plans to modernize China. This concept contained three main points:

Firstly: Remoulding the Confucianist Message – Chinese Identity
Chinese traditional Confucian philosophy was at the foundation of this concept by Jiang, and in order to give the nation more moral cohesion, Jiang revived the state cult of Confucius. In this respect, it would be helpful to identify the extent to which Confucianist theory has influenced the Chinese people in the past – and that to which it is still affecting the development of the Chinese nation today. Jiang had been married to Song Mei-Ling who was a serious Christian and, although, they married in the church, Jiang never converted as a believer to Christianity. Jiang continued to be a serious believer of Confucian philosophy and visited regularly Confucius’ cemetery in Shandong province to pay respect to the traditional Chinese philosopher.

During China’s Cultural Revolution of the 1960s Confucianism was disregarded but nowadays it is back. This revival is a private and a public, On the campus of Beijing's prestigious Qinghua University there used to be a statue of Chairman Mao, now there’s Confucius. On Tiananmen Square a 9.5 meter bronze sculpture of Confucius is facing in the direction of Mao’s portrait. Placing the statue at China’s political heart is the communist government’s most visible endorsement yet of the 2,000 year-old sage.

Premier Wen Jiabao averred: ‘From Confucius to Sun Yatsen’, and ‘the traditional culture of the Chinese nation has numerous precious elements’, The idea of the Chinese Communist Party leadership is that China needs its own identity as a counterbalance to the growing numbers of Christians in the country. As we know that Buddhism originally came from India and Christianity from the West, while both are religions not accepted by the CCP.

Today in China Christianity is expected to increase considerable, already the number of Christian believers is about 70 million. This is not appreciated by the communist party leadership and therefore as a counteraction wants to bring back Confucianism, thus providing the Chinese people with an identity they are familiar with. Kang Xiaoguang, social policy adviser to former premier Zhu Rongji argues it is vital for China to rediscover its cultural tradition, especially the Confucian values he believes can rebuild the country's moral and social
standards. According to Kang, the ardent advocate for the revival of Confucius, the debate over whether or not to resurrect Confucius is already over and what is being decided now is whether to integrate his principles as part of the education system, a political ideology, or a national religion.

**Secondly :** To give the nation more moral cohesion in relation to Confucius, Jiang Jieshi revived the state cult of Confucius and in 1934 launched a campaign, the so-called New Life Movement, to inculcate Confucian morals. A practical plan was developed for the Chinese people in order to turn them into more civilized citizens. Jiang had observed the people’s bad habits like laziness, dishonesty, corruption, hygiene etc. and this plan provided them with daily ‘rules’ to follow. This plan had to be given shape by the New Life Movement that was supervised and coordinated by the Guomindang. The principal aim of the movement was the social regeneration of China, through the promotion of clean and tidy habits and an unselfish consideration for others. Respect for each other and the desire to prevent the exploitation of one person by another were the two factors that were at the heart of the movement.

Notwithstanding the name ‘New Life’, the movement taught the age-old message of duty – to home, family and country. National conscience and social cooperation were, accordingly, held to rest upon the four ancient Chinese virtues. Jiang said that these four virtues had in ancient times made China a mighty nation, and now they were to serve as a basis, it was believed then that as a result of materialism and a steadily growing contact with the civilization of the West that China had lost touch with these virtues, which in ancient times were the foundation of her moral strength.

Looking at the situation in communist China and the methods that the Chinese government is advocating in order to improve people’s living standards and enhance the Chinese nation as a whole, one will notice that the very same ideas are used as in the 1930s.

**Thirdly :** Westernization of the Military
Jiang Jieshi’s military orientation was a result of his education, Jiang was a professional soldier and his view was that the unification and strengthening of China depended on the establishment of a strong military. Jiang had a group of people faithful to him and who gave shape to this militarization. ‘Blood and Ironism’ became a catchword for a radical militarization of the Guomindang under the aegis of this group. This development perhaps underlines the contradiction in what many Chinese saw as modernization, which all too often was confused with militarization. China’s military was probably the most modern sector of 1930s China. The Chinese communist government today put forward the strategy ‘make our country prosperous and our armed forces powerful’, and that is basically the same method that Jiang Jieshi followed.
But what type of power will China become? In today’s interconnected and globalized world, the answer will affect each and every one of us. Whether it’s a peaceful rise or potential threat, China's 21st century emergence as a great world power will change the lives of everyone. Chinese nuclear modernization has stunned defense analysts, especially the rapid mobilization of its strategic commands. China's military and security developments over the past few years have proven to be a significant modernization of its military capabilities. China continues to stress that its military modernization is in line with its peaceful rise in the world.

Conclusion
When we compare Jiang Jieshi’s concept of the 1930s with today’s development in China, we find striking agreements between methods and goals of Jiang and that of the Chinese Communist Party. Both, Jiang and the CCP, although from a different perspective want a better life and prosperity for the Chinese people basically through planned economic development. For instance, Shanghai in the 1930s was subject to this development given shape by a group of Guomindang elite members who wanted to realize Jiang’s idea of turning Shanghai into an international city like New York with a respected stock market.

Looking at Shanghai’s development under communist rule, Shanghai’s reign as the most cosmopolitan city in China ended quickly. However, the city came back from a forgotten and backward place to an enormous growth. After years of being closed off to the rest of the world, Shanghai is rapidly regaining its reputation as a cosmopolitan city. While Beijing is the capital, recognized as the center of politics, culture, information, and academia, Shanghai again is widely regarded as the financial center of China, a progressive enterprising city, open to new ideas.

The economic development and modernization of China today had been initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1970s on the basis that “Poverty is not socialism and being rich is glorious”. The Chinese people have well understood Deng’s message. However, economic development under communist rule is clouded somewhat by a spiraling crime rate, unemployment, corruption, and an increasing wealth gap, social ills that have made many people looking to the ancient wisdom of Confucius for solutions.
Portrait of Jiang Jieshi
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